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**Beneath the
cross,
counsels,
meditations,
and prayers ...**

George Everard



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BENEATH THE CROSS.

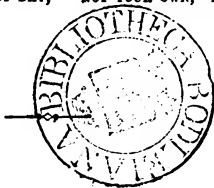
Counsels, Meditations, and Prayers for
Communicants.

BY THE

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"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene."
—JOHN XIX. 25.

"I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was LOVE."—CANT. ii. 3, 4.

"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips, when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches."—PSALM lxxiii. 5, 6.

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."—PSALM civ. 34.

I.

Beneath the Cross.

THE CROSS of Christ is the believer's lesson book. The sufferings He bore for our sake should be the subject of our constant meditation. It is true we should ponder the story of His wondrous life, and rejoice in the victory achieved by His Resurrection. We delight to think upon His Ascension to the right hand of the Father, upon His faithful intercession before the throne, and the hope of His coming kingdom. But the Cross is the central point. It is that to which through life He was ever looking forward. His Resurrection ensures to us the benefits there purchased for us. And as our exalted High Priest, He has no other plea than the work He completed for us. As the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, He abides in His mediatorial kingdom. It is to His death that the redeemed will ascribe the glory of their salvation : "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Especially, as Communicants, it is our privilege to dwell on the scenes and incidents connected with our Lord's death. The whole value and significance of the Lord's Supper rests upon the work wrought out for us on the tree. It was instituted by Christ on the night of His betrayal, ere He entered the dark valley of conflict, agony, and shame. It speaks to us not of His life or His resurrection, but of that dying love on account of which He gave His body to be broken and His blood to be shed for the redemption of the world. The exhortation in the Communion office reminds us of this: "And to the end that we should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained to us; He hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort."

Nowhere, as in the Cross and in the scenes connected with it, do we see such revelations of the heart of Christ. Love bursts forth in every

direction, both to friends and foes. The last touch of the hand so soon to be pierced, ere it is fettered and bound, must be for the healing of one sent to apprehend Him. No thought for Himself shall hinder Him from pleading for His disciples, that they might go their way unharmed. Mercy shines forth in her beauty, seeking pardon for His cruel murderers, compassionating the daughters of Jerusalem, and saving a sinner of the deepest dye. Justice, too, stands forth in unsullied glory. In paying the debt of human guilt, in bearing the penalty of a broken law, Christ is seen to be a just God as also a Saviour.

It is our joy to remember that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." As He was then, in pity and compassion and faithfulness and love, so is He now. The suffering and the shame of the Cross is past, but not the grace and truth which was there revealed. At this moment is He as tender and as true, as ready to succour those who turn to Him, and to pray for those who have hated Him, as He was when suffering on Calvary.

It seems to me, moreover, that in our Lord's Passion, there is precious instruction for the Communicant in almost every matter belonging to the Christian life. What are the perils

you are likely to meet with, and how best to overcome them,—what should be your life in secret before God, and what your path in the world,—what is your strength in the hour of temptation and in the season of sorrow, how to crucify the world, and to glorify God in the position which you occupy,—all this may be learnt in fellowship with our suffering Redeemer.

Beneath the Cross likewise you may best learn to cultivate every Christian grace and virtue. Meekness and courage, zeal and love, prayer and patience and longsuffering, and submission to the will of God, are the fruits of a believing view of Christ's death. You may learn, too, to conquer sin by the sight of that which it cost Christ to save you from it. The nail and the spear may be driven through the sins which have been most cherished. You may thus be enabled to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.

And beneath the Cross you may learn another lesson. You may learn how to die. Through death Christ has destroyed the power of death: the sting is gone. To him that believeth, death is life; for it is departing to be with Christ, which is far better. Nor will the pattern left you by the Saviour be without its consolation. His toil and suffering ended, He committed His Spirit

into the Father's hand. And when you have finished the work given you to do, you may peacefully yield up your spirit to the faithful care of Him who hath trodden the dark valley before you. To Him you can fly for refuge in the solemn hour.

“ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

Jesus, my God, to Thee I fly,
Thou art a refuge ever nigh :
When heart shall fail, when life is past,
Thou wilt receive my soul at last.

Therefore let us often betake ourselves to Calvary. Let memory recall and ponder those hours on which the everlasting peace of the Church depends. Let our faith bridge over the centuries that have passed between. Let us go and stand in thought beside the faithful women who were last at the cross and first at the grave. Let us look again, and yet again, and discover new lessons of instruction and fresh grounds for the deepest contrition, as also for everlasting joy and thankfulness.

“ Upon the cross I gaze,
And there behold its sad yet healing rays :
Beacon of hope which, lifted up on high,
Illumes with heavenly light the tear-dimmed eye.”

For such meditation we need, above all things, the anointing of the Holy Ghost. It is the Spirit which testifies of the Saviour. It is only in the Spirit that we learn the truth for our soul's profit; therefore, in reading the following pages, I would ask you often to lift up your heart to Him, who is the giver of all true wisdom.

"O God, open Thou mine eyes to behold the light of Thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Give me the Spirit of grace and supplication, that I may look upon Him who was pierced for my sin, and mourn in godly sorrow for that which I have done amiss. Enlighten the eyes of my understanding, and give me the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may know more of the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and of the greatness of His love. Give me the unction of the Holy One, and renew and sanctify me through Thy truth. Draw me closer to Thyself, and teach me out of this book whatever is needful for my everlasting good, for Jesus Christ's sake."

Of course the meditations and counsels given here are but a fragment of a great subject. They do not profess to be anything like a connected exposition of the scenes and lessons of our Lord's Passion. At best they are but a few clusters from this precious Vine. They are but

a handful of fruit from the Tree of Life, but they will answer the purpose for which they are intended if they lead the Communicant nearer to the Saviour, and quicken him in the closer study of His last hours on earth.

The chapters in this book might be profitably read on consecutive mornings and evenings, for a week before partaking of the Lord's Supper; or they might be used for a fortnight, by taking only one each day, morning or evening.

The passages of Scripture at the close of the book are intended for meditation during the time of Administration; some half-dozen or more being taken at each Communion season.

This book would be also suitable for use during Passion Week.

To Calvary, Lord, in spirit now
Our weary souls repair,
To dwell upon Thy dying love,
And taste its sweetness there.

There, through Thine hour of deepest woe,
Thy suffering spirit passed :
Grace there its wondrous victory gained,
And Love endured its last.

Dear suffering Lamb, Thy bleeding wounds,
With cords of love Divine
Have drawn our willing hearts to Thee,
And linked our life with Thine.

II.

The Beloved Disciple.

NIGH to the suffering Saviour what strange contrasts do we see! Light and darkness, good and evil, are found in close contact one with the other. We see the dark form of the traitor, and the Wicked One prompting him to his destruction; but we see also the beloved Apostle "leaning on the Saviour's bosom."

This latter is a description full of instruction for every Communicant who desires near fellowship with Christ: it is a pattern for a believer. And if you are such, however sinful or unworthy, do not regard it as a privilege beyond your reach.

"I sit down at Christ's footstool?" said one, "but I cannot get nearer than this." But the Master calls you both to abide at His footstool in lowliness and meekness, and also to lean upon Him and rest upon Him in fullest confidence of His

tender love, so that it is no presumption for you to do so. Never forget that in yourself you are utterly vile, and altogether unworthy either to come to His footstool or in any way to approach One so holy and so great. Still are you bidden, accepted and beautified in His robe of righteousness, to come up out of the wilderness leaning upon Him. And it will be your comfort and joy thus to act.

Jesus, we rest in Thee,—
In Thee ourselves we hide ;
Laden with guilt and misery,
Where can we rest beside :
'Tis on Thy meek and lowly breast
Our weary souls alone can rest.

I. This position, leaning upon the Beloved, implies *an entire and abiding reliance upon Christ and His salvation*. We need continually to be reminded that all strength and consolation is found in cleaving to Christ, confiding in Him, taking to Him in prayer every want and anxiety, and expecting from His hands every blessing that a God of love can bestow.

If I would go on my way happily and serve the Lord with a free heart, I must trust to my Saviour in everything and for everything; I must

trust His providence as I trust His grace ; I must ever see Him at my right hand in the midst of life's duties ; I must believe that He is able to keep me in every emergency ; I must never yield to any doubt that His blood cleanseth me from my sin day by day ; I must assure myself, from His Word, that He will never deceive me nor disappoint my hopes ; I must learn out more and more of His unchangeable loving-kindness to those who flee to Him ; I must thus, by faith, put myself and all that concerns me into His mighty and merciful keeping. Whatever fails me, Christ never will. Therefore my soul resteth upon Him ; and I shall never, never be confounded.

II. This position is one of *separation from the world*. Leaning upon Christ, rejoicing in the sunshine of His love, delighting in Him as my rich and satisfying portion, why should I go and mingle in the doubtful pleasures of a world that crucified Him ? Has He not told His people, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" ? Has He not warned us that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ? If I lean on my Saviour, shall I love to spend my time in scenes and places where His precious

Name may never be uttered? If I go where I must leave Christ at the door, may He not withdraw from me and permit me for many a long day to mourn His absence?

I dare not excuse myself in this matter by the example of others; neither would I ever claim permission to do as other Christians do. I must set examples, rather than follow them. Perhaps there is no sin that could be named but might be excused on the ground that some child of God had at one time or another committed it. Nay, I dare not copy others in their inconsistencies; but I must drink into Christ's Spirit, and walk ever in His footsteps. I will ask myself again and again, "What would Jesus do, were He in my place?" and when I see this, I will go and do likewise. If friends around seek to lead me in another path, I will refuse to go with them. I will not dishonour my Lord by doubtful courses: I will go where Christ will go with me, and nowhere else. If need be, I will go with Him to exile, to prison, to suffering, or to death. But I will not turn away from Him to drink of the poisoned cup: I will never choose as my life-partner one who does not love Him. If I am Christ's, the ball-room and the theatre is no place for me. Even

the Skating-rink has its perils for the soul as well as for the body. Therefore I must be on the watch.

O blessed Redeemer, give me grace to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the Devil ; and with pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God !

III. Here, too, leaning on Christ, is *the place of wisdom*. Here may I learn secrets of Divine truth, which I cannot learn elsewhere. Whilst John was leaning on Christ, the Saviour whispered in his ear a secret not revealed to the rest : our Lord told him who was the traitor. And our Lord has many secrets to impart to those who keep near to Him. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." In Christ are treasured up infinite riches of wisdom and knowledge ; and whilst I keep near to Him, He teaches me by His Spirit. He gives me the anointing from above ; He unfolds something of the mystery of His Providence ; He throws a beam of light on some of the hard problems that in this world we cannot solve ; He makes brighter and clearer the doctrines of salvation, and the hopes of a glorious immortality.

Would I become truly wise in the things which are most essential? It is not by human reasonings or abstruse arguments, but by the study of the Word in fellowship with the Son of God, that I shall best succeed. He will be my Teacher: He will open my understanding to know more of His truth, and in His light shall I see light.

IV. I shall, moreover, *abide in safeguard* while I thus lean on Christ. Resting in Jesus, reposing in His love, no harm can possibly come nigh me: nothing in earth or in hell can injure one hair of my head whilst I stay my soul on Him. I am safe from condemnation. However guilty I be, conscious of evil and failure in heart and life, yet He cannot and will not condemn me. Will He condemn the soul for whom He died, and who is clinging to Him as his sole reliance? Will He take a poor feeble child, resting in His bosom, and cast him away from His presence? Ah, never will He do this; but He will confess him as His own, and set him before His face for ever.

In this position I am safe, too, from the assaults of the enemy. In myself I am too weak to resist the least temptation; but in

Christ, as my Shield and my Fortress, I can overcome the greatest. He is stronger than the strongest. Until Satan can overcome Christ, he cannot destroy the soul that is trusting in Him. Here, too, is my Refuge: whatever storm may blow or tempest may beat, I run to my Saviour and hide in Him. In poverty or pain, in disappointment or desolation, in anguish of mind or sorrow of heart, the living, loving Redeemer is my strong Castle. Therefore will I fear nothing. I have peace in Christ, though tribulation in the world. Though every earthly tie be broken and every human comforter be gone, yet I lean on Him,—the Husband of the widow, the Father of the fatherless, the Friend, the Helper and Stay of all who cleave to Him.

V. I love this position, too, because *it is one of holiness*. Every Communicant ought to seek progress in holiness, and strive after the very highest attainments. But where can this grace be found? Not in the bondage of legal fears, not in multiplying external duties and ceremonial observances, not in leaning too much upon the spiritual direction of Christ's ministers, but in continually keeping nigh to Christ. If I am much with others, I cannot fail to catch

something of their spirit: if I am much with Christ, I shall grow more and more like Him. I shall become meek, and gentle, and patient, and forbearing, for His Spirit will rest upon me; I shall watch against the least sin, for who would wilfully wound and pierce the tender heart on which he was resting? I shall love the Saviour more, for I shall know more of the reality and depth and tenderness of His love to me.

And I shall be able to make progress in the paths of righteousness, for strength is ever being imparted to those who rely upon Christ. Though from first to last I shall ever fall short of the full standard of the image of my Saviour, and need His blood and His righteousness as my only plea, yet in His strength I may press forward nearer and nearer to the mark.

And thus abiding, I may find an earnest and pledge of the rest above. At present I am passing through the wilderness, but by-and-by I shall reach the glory. Now I lean upon Christ in the midst of sorrows and troubles and cares, but then I shall lean upon Him in a world where not a cloud will darken the sky. I shall be for ever with the Lord. My tears

and temptations, my cares and my sorrows, will be left behind, and I shall be with Him who loved me with an everlasting love.

I always go to Jesus,
When troubled or distress :
I always find a refuge
Upon His loving breast.
I tell Him all my trials,
I tell Him all my grief ;
And while my lips are speaking,
He gives my heart relief.

When full of dread foreboding
And flowing o'er with tears,
He calms away my sorrow
And hushes all my fears,—
He comprehends my weakness,
The peril I am in,
And He supplies the armour
I need to conquer sin.

When those are cold and faithless
Who once were fond and true,
With careless hearts forsaking
The old friends for the new,
I turn to Him whose friendship
Knows neither change nor end :
I always find in Jesus
A never-failing friend.

I always go to Jesus :
No matter when or where
I seek His precious presence,
I'm sure to find Him there.
In times of joy or sorrow,
Whate'er my need may be,
I always go to Jesus,
And Jesus comes to me.

PRAYER.

O LORD Jesus Christ, Thou art my Hiding-place and my sure Refuge. I bless and praise Thee for Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth. Manifest Thyself unto me more and more, and bring me still nearer to Thyself. Draw me, and I will run after Thee ; hide me in the secret place of Thy tabernacle, and shield me from all assaults of the enemy ; keep me always mindful of Thy presence, and teach me to lean continually on Thee.

I pray Thee, O gracious Saviour, fix my heart on Thee and renew me in Thine own image. Send to me the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. May He ever dwell within me, and fill me with

all joy and peace in believing. Pour into my heart such love to Thee, that I may love Thee far above all things. Preserve me from the evil that is in the world. Keep me ever separate from sinners, and may I never choose the company of those who walk in the path that leadeth to destruction. Strengthen me by Thy grace, that I may be fearless and bold in confessing Thy name. O keep me as the apple of Thine eye, and hide me under the shadow of Thy wing. Cast about me the robe of Thy righteousness, and be nigh to me by night and by day. Let those around me see that I have been with Jesus. Show Thy marvellous loving-kindness, Thou that art the Saviour of all that trust in Thee. Give me the comfort of communion with Thee on earth, and then grant me everlasting rest in Thy presence above. Bow down Thine ear to hear, and defend me evermore by Thy mighty aid, for Thy name's sake. Amen. ,

III.

Around the Table.

PERHAPS it may be but a little company of Communicants with whom you join from time to time in remembering the Saviour's death. It may be in a village church; and when the rest of the congregation have dispersed you meet around the Table of the Master, and in His name partake of the bread and wine. But why should you do this? Go back to Jerusalem: go back to the Upper room where Christ sits down with His chosen band of disciples. It is the Passover season, and He has earnestly desired to sit down with them at the feast. For the time is at hand: the end is drawing near when the true Passover must be sacrificed, when the Shepherd shall be smitten and the flock scattered.

Our Lord partakes, with His disciples, of the Paschal Supper, so full of grateful recollections to the faithful Israelite, and still more precious

as pointing forward to New Testament blessings. Christ then institutes a new feast, suited alike for His disciples in all countries and in all periods of the Church's history. He takes in His hand the small loaf from the table. He gives thanks, and breaks it and distributes a part to each of those present: "Take, eat," He saith; "this is my body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of Me." Then He takes the cup and hands it from one to another, saying to them, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." Then He adds that He would no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until it should be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 26—29; Luke xxii. 17—20; 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.)

Very simple and expressive is this ordinance. There is nothing so mysterious about it that we need shrink from the comfort and help which it is intended to bring. We need but humble, loving, believing hearts, to taste all the precious treasures of grace which it unfolds.

Let us now take but one thought. Let us consider it as a pledge of our love and obedience.

In Eden a tree was given to our first parents

to prove them whether or no they would follow the will of God. They were neither to touch it nor to taste it, lest they should die. But they failed. They broke the simple covenant: they forfeited their inheritance of life and peace, and brought upon themselves and their posterity an evil heritage of sin and sorrow and death.

In the Lord's Supper the disciple of Christ has a way afforded him of proving his obedience. The command is so plain, the precept is so easy in itself, that he can have no excuse for disregarding it. Had the Christian been commanded to perform some hard and painful duty,—as Abraham was called to offer up Isaac,—or to go upon a distant pilgrimage, or to have done some act that would have required length of time and considerable effort, and that would have taxed his endurance to the uttermost, no doubt he ought to have done it: it would have been only right for him cheerfully to obey, for the sake of Him who sacrificed all for us and laid down His life for our sake.

But Christ has appointed it otherwise. The test He has given has nothing painful or laborious about it. It is a means of strength and consolation to all who use it in faith. He has bidden His people meet in His name. He bids

them partake of bread and wine, and thus remember His dying love. It is His one express command: "This do ye in remembrance of Me."

It may be that some reader hesitates to obey this precept of Christ; but if so, be careful to inquire the reason. What is keeping you back? What is standing in the way? What is your motive for refusing? If you take Christ for your Master, if you reckon yourself as belonging to Him, can you excuse yourself from giving this proof of your sincerity?

Perhaps you say, "It is a very serious thing to come to the Communion, and I am but a young believer, and I am afraid to come."

But is it not a very serious thing to stay away? Shall you not be afraid to disobey so simple and loving a command?

If a dear relation or friend were dying, perhaps a mother who had ever shown her tender love for you, and she were to ask you to perform some duty or carry out some wish or plan which she had arranged, would you let anything hinder you from fulfilling her last request? But think of the love of Christ. What more could He have done to show His love for you? And was not this His last command? And does He not say, "If ye love Me, keep my command-

ments"? Ah, is it not sad forgetfulness and great ingratitude to your best Friend which leads you to turn away from doing that to which He calls you?

Think again what it is that you say as you leave the church, whilst others remain. Do you not declare, as plainly as if you spoke it with your lips, something of this kind—"Lord, I do not come to Thy Table, for I am not one of Thine; I do not trust Thee, I do not love Thee, I have no part or lot in the matter: I confess that I am not one of Thy disciples now, nor do I look to share Thy glory hereafter"?

And is it not a serious thing, by thus turning your back on the Lord's Table, openly to acknowledge that you do not belong to Him?

Ah, suppose you disobey Christ in this way, is it not a proof that you do not truly love Him, and may you not look for it that He may shut His door against you hereafter?

Years ago, in a village church, a few Christians met together at their monthly Communion. One man remained in the porch outside the door as the service was being held. To him the quiet half-hour seemed well-nigh a year. His conscience smote him: his thoughts accused him of ingratitude and disobedience. He re-



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membered how month after month he had been a stranger to the Lord's Table. "Ah," said he to himself, "I am outside this door! What if I should be found at last outside the door of heaven!" That quiet half-hour bore its fruit, and led him to a more entire consecration to the Lord's service and obedience to His commands.

But if it is a command, it is no less an invitation of the most considerate kindness that the disciple of Christ should come to this feast of love.

When you receive an invitation from a friend to go to their house or sit down at their table, you regard it as an act of kindness on their part. But was there ever such kindness in the heart of an earthly friend as you find in Jesus when He thus bids you draw nigh to Him? It is condescending love which prompts the invitation. Here is the great King of heaven and earth inviting one of His subjects—one who has been sinful, rebellious, and utterly unworthy—to come into His presence and partake of His goodness. At this feast there is the richest provision and the most lasting profit. You come to partake here of the finest of the wheat, honey out of the rock, wines on the lees well refined: you come to feed on Christ Himself.

He nourishes your soul with the hidden manna
of His grace and love.

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face ;
Here faith can touch and handle things unseen ,
Here I would grasp with firmer hand Thy grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean ;
Here would I feed upon the bread of God ;
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven ;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load ;
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

You may go the world's banquet, you may taste its choicest pleasures, you may find a passing gratification in the successful pursuit of wealth or of some object of ambition, but by-and-by you lose your interest in it, or disappointment comes, and you grow weary and tired and restless. But come to this banquet of heavenly love, come in faith, trusting in the Saviour's gracious promises, and you shall sit down with great delight under His banner of love, you shall have fellowship with Apostles, martyrs, saints,—men of whom the world was not worthy,—and you shall find everlasting strength and consolation to your soul.

But who are welcome? Whom will Christ reckon as worthy guests?

Not the careless, the heedless, the indifferent.

D

If you have no earnest desire for salvation, and no longing for a holy, Christ-like life ; if you are of the world and like the world, I dare not ask you to come. There is something you need first. You want new life in the Holy Ghost ; you want conversion of heart to God ; you want that mighty change whereby old things pass away and all things become new.

Neither do I ask you to come if you are well satisfied with yourself. If you are content with your own condition and have no sense of your sinfulness and poverty, you cannot come acceptably. Only a broken heart can feed on a crucified Saviour. He who is most worthy in God's sight, is most humbled for his exceeding unworthiness.

But there are many who are kept back by a painful conviction that they have so much evil about them,—that they have so little faith, repentance, or love, that it would be presumptuous on their part to draw nigh.

Is this your own feeling? Is it this which prevents your approach to the Table? If so, is it not a mistake? Are you not forgetting the purpose of Christ's work and the meaning of this ordinance? For if any one comes in the right spirit, what is it which he professes?

What does the true Communicant virtually say? Is it not this:—"Lord, I am a sinner deserving death, and my only hope is in Thee. I trust only in Thine all-atoning sacrifice; I trust only in Thy finished work, and in Thy blood which was shed for my sin"? And is not this the plea for a sinner,—for any sinner who turns from sin and flies for mercy to the Saviour?

Look not at your repentance or faith or love, but rather fix your eye on Him who will in no wise cast out any who come to Him. He knows all your sin and all that you lack, and yet He loves you better than He knows you.

Ever have imprinted on your remembrance "the Comfortable words" spoken by Christ and His Apostles, which our Church lays down as the warrant for our approach to the holy Table. They make it plain that no anxious, penitent sinner need despair, nor any one imagine that he is forbidden to draw near.

"Come unto Me, all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." (Matt. xi. 28.) Will not this assure you of a welcome? Whatever your burden,—whatever your weary, toiling, troubled spirit may need,—here is rest and refreshment provided in Christ.

"So God loved the world that He gave His

only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

Will not this promise meet your case? A world-wide compassion, a priceless gift, a message bringing home the offer of life to each soul. What more can you ask or seek?

Hear also what St. Paul saith: "This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

What abundant consolation is here added. The blessing is for sinners,—only for sinners,—for all sinners who own their sin and will accept it. Christ came to save sinners. He died for sinners,—sinners of every kind and degree, therefore for you. And it is a true saying. Why not believe it? Why not honour Christ by trusting Him as a Saviour for sinners, even the chief?

Hear also what St. John saith: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 1.)

Here is yet further encouragement. Perhaps you have been a backslider, or have committed some special sin since first you sought the Lord.

But you are not to give up. You are not shut out: the door of mercy is open. Though you have sinned, you have a righteous Advocate: His propitiation will answer for your guilt. He will plead on your behalf: Him the Father heareth always. Therefore do not add the sin of unbelief to your other sins: do not doubt your Saviour's free love or His willingness to save. Cast on Him the uttermost of your sin, and be persuaded that to the uttermost He will save. Relying upon His all-sufficient, abounding grace and mercy, come to His Table and set your seal to His faithfulness and truth.

Mine is the sin, but Thine the righteousness,—
Mine is the guilt, but Thine the cleansing blood :
Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace,—
Thy blood, Thy righteousness, O Lord, my God.

PRAYER.

MOST gracious and merciful Father, I bless and praise Thee for Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth. I thank Thee for giving Thine only Son for our redemption: I thank Thee for all the unspeakable benefits that come to us through His death.

O Lord Jesus Christ, my only Hope and Saviour, I cast myself at Thy footstool and beseech Thee to save and bless me. Make me to know more of my sin. May Thy precious blood answer for all my guilt : may Thy blessed Spirit ever dwell within me, and make me holy both in body and soul.

O Lord, in the days of Thy flesh Thou didst receive sinners and eat with them. It is thus that I come to Thee. I am sinful and vile, and have no good thing to bring to Thee. I come not unto Thee trusting in my own righteousness, but in Thy great mercy. I am not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs beneath Thy table. But I flee to Thee, and I know that Thou wilt not reject me. Oh, cast me not away from Thy presence ; but take me as I am, and make me all Thou wouldest have me to be. Give me true profit from this holy feast ; strengthen my faith and increase my love ; nourish me with all goodness, and make me bold and faithful in confessing Thy name ; help me to crucify the flesh, and to subdue every sinful passion ; enable me to live henceforth only to serve and please Thee. O Lord, hear this my petition, and make me a true and faithful Communicant, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

The Feast of Remembrance.

THE ordinances of the Gospel are very precious and helpful when rightly used.

They are golden pitchers, and, when filled with the living water, they minister refreshment and strength to the soul. But we need the exercise of faith and love: we need a right knowledge of the purpose for which they were given; we need to keep close to the teaching of the Scriptures, that we may obtain a true view of the way they bring comfort and help to the believer.

This is especially the case with respect to the Lord's Supper. It may easily be perverted. Unless used aright, it may prove a hindrance instead of a help in drawing nearer to the Saviour.

I. Remember this ordinance is a *Sacrament*, and not a *Sacrifice*. It is in no sense a sacrifice,

except as a part of that sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which the Christian ought ever to be offering. There was nothing sacrificial about the ordinance at its institution. It was in the Upper room, and not in the temple : it was on a table, and not on an altar. Nor is there in its present observance anything of a propitiatory offering or sacrifice. There is no priest to offer it, for Christ's ministers in the New Testament are never once spoken of as such. There is no altar, for it is the "Lord's Table" around which Christ's people meet : there is no victim, for the body of Christ is in heaven and not on earth.

Remember, then, that the Lord's Supper is a Sacrament, and not a sacrifice. The original meaning of the word "sacrament" teaches the communicant a precious lesson. It was the word used for the oath of fidelity which the Roman soldier took to the Emperor : it may therefore remind you how faithful each Communicant is bound to be as a soldier of the great Captain of his salvation. But in its present meaning it reminds us that the Lord's Supper is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Through that which we see, we are to look up to that which we do not see : through the outward ordinance, we are to look

up to the invisible Saviour, and learn more to rely upon Him.

Remember, also, that the Lord's Supper is the Sacrament of remembrance. Its main design is to lead Christians to remember Christ: it is to lead us directly to Himself. We are not to rest in the ordinance, but to fix every thought on Jesus and His dying love. When you go to His Table, think on Gethsemane and Calvary. Ponder all that He has wrought for your salvation, that as you dwell upon His tender pity and loving-kindness your hearts may burn within you, and every power of your soul may bless His holy name.

Be careful ever to keep this in mind. Only in proportion as the Lord's Supper leads you straight to Christ Himself, and binds you closer to Him, do you reap its true profit. Too often Christ Himself, His love, His promise, His free salvation, is obscured rather than set forth in this ordinance.

"I grieve over my church," said an aged Christian lady, with reference to a church where extreme views and practices prevailed: "they have hidden Christ behind the altar." Alas, in many cases it is too true! The table is changed into an altar, and then, behind a cloud of cere-

monies, behind exaggerated and unscriptural views of this ordinance, Christ Himself,—the crucified, risen, exalted, glorified Saviour, the living Friend, the great High Priest of His Church,—is too often left in the background. The Sacrament is frequented ; but the Saviour Himself is forgotten, or not enthroned supreme on the altar of the heart.

II. This ordinance is *a Parable*, and not *a Miracle*. As there is nothing sacrificial, so is there nothing miraculous about it. The bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine. There is no change in the elements, neither is there anything added to them. They are set apart for a sacred purpose ; but neither the words of Christ Himself in the first instance, nor the words of His ministers now, effect any change in their substance. When persons bow the head and worship as if Christ's body and blood were present on the Lord's Table, it is as truly idolatry, though they think not so, as if they worshipped an idol of gold or silver.

A caution is needed in these days, and may be a word to guide the young Communicant. Never bow the head to anything you can see : whether it be to the elements in the Sacrament, or the

so-called altar, or to any image of Christ or Virgin or Saint,—whatever it be, never bow down to it. “Flee from idolatry.” Shrink from any approach to so great a sin. Watch against the first step to that which is dishonouring to God, and so distinctly forbidden in the second commandment and throughout His Word.

But if the Lord’s Supper is in no sense a miracle, it is an exquisite parable of redeeming grace. It is a lively representation, a beautiful type and emblem of the marvellous love of Christ.

* It is said that our Lord’s words, “This is my body,” ought, without question or dispute, to make us believe a presence in the elements. But what are words except to show the mind of Him who utters them? And must we not judge one part of our Lord’s teaching by another? And was not our Lord’s teaching from first to last ever by figure and parable, leading those who heard Him to further inquiry and thought?

And was it not so very evidently in this case?

Our Lord takes into His hand the bread, and,

* From their great importance to Communicants, I have repeated in this chapter a few thoughts from a larger work, “Steps Across.”

having broken it, He gives it to each one of them, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given unto you; do this in remembrance of Me."

As if He would say, "See here in type and figure my sacred body. Now you see it whole, active, living; but as I break this bread before your eyes, so ere another day pass shall you see this body of mine bruised, wounded, torn, broken. The nails shall tear these hands and feet; the cruel scourge shall plough deep furrows on my back; the spear shall pierce this side. And it is all for you. Others may give you less costly gifts; but I give you myself, my body to bleed and die for your salvation. And whensoever ye eat this bread, ever think of my dying love, and nourish your souls by trusting in my finished sacrifice."

So likewise was it when our Lord gave them the cup: "Drink ye all of this, for this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me." (Compare Matt. xxvi. 27, 28; 1 Cor. xi. 25.)

As if He would say, "You know how in olden times the blood was perpetually shed. Moses

took the blood of beasts and sprinkled both the book and the people. Aaron went into the Holy Place every year, with the blood of the sacrifices. But all this could never give peace, for such sacrifices could never take away sin. But now I make a new covenant with you : I offer you, in my blood, free and complete remission. And this cup is a figure of this new covenant, and of the blood which seals it : this wine poured forth testifies of the blood which to-morrow shall be shed for the sins of the world. It tells of that stream of salvation in which the souls of my people shall be cleansed. Therefore drink of it every one of you. Take this cup and drink this wine, and thus give a pledge that you accept my covenant and trust only in my precious blood."

Taken in this sense, all is plain and clear. There is nothing forced or unnatural about it. It is exactly in a line with our Lord's other teaching, and it gives us a very blessed view of the work Christ wrought on our behalf.

III. This ordinance is a *blessed Channel of grace*, but not *the Fountain of grace*. You are not to regard the Sacrament as *necessarily* bringing grace to the soul : you are not to put the ordinance in the place of the Spirit, who alone

can quicken and sanctify the believer. At the same time it is a channel of rich blessing to all who come to it in the spirit of faith and prayer. Whilst we deny that there is grace in the elements, we most strongly affirm that there is grace to be found in a believing use of the Sacrament.

But it is all the work of the Holy Ghost. You obey Christ's command,—you come to His Table, you eat the bread and drink the wine; and Christ, by His Spirit, draws near. You have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Your heart is cheered with a fresh sense of His pardoning mercy. You see His love in a clearer light; you are strengthened inwardly, as by faith you feed on His body once given for you; you are comforted, as you trust more fully in His cleansing blood; you know not how, but Christ has been by your side manifesting Himself to you as He doth not to the world; you go back to the common duties of life with His peace in your heart, and longing more than ever to live to His glory.

But how may you gain most of this true and lasting benefit? How may you come to this ordinance that you may grow in grace and have nearer fellowship with Christ?

Secure a time for quiet, thoughtful communing with your own heart, before drawing near to the Table. Talk with yourself about your daily life, and inquire whether you are walking consistently with your high calling. Have you been pressing forward or halting on the way? Has any special sin been drawing you back? Then, in the remembrance of what you are, hiding nothing and excusing nothing, yield yourself afresh to the Saviour without the least reserve. Fall low and look up. Be humble and yet trust the Lord fully. He will accept you and He will help you. Therefore "be not afraid, only believe."

Make it your habit to come regularly. Whether it be each month, or more frequently, have your fixed time for coming, and let nothing but the most urgent necessity hinder you. Do not keep back because of your failings, let them rather lead you to seek more strength by coming: do not stay away because you do not feel as you would. It is a great snare to dwell upon feelings: they are very changeable, but Christ is ever the same. When you seem to lack all right feeling throw yourself on Christ, and He will in due season supply your need.

When you come to the Holy Communion, draw near in a prayerful, trustful spirit. Come, ever

taking the lowest place : sit down in the lowest room. What are you but a sinner, a saved sinner at best ? "What hast thou that thou didst not receive ?" Still, come praying, trusting, expecting. The Lord delights to fill empty vessels, and to make the weakest and most unworthy monuments, to His praise and glory. Open thy mouth wide, and He will fill it.

And when the Communion season is over, take heed to your spirit that you lose not the blessing you may have gained. Keep the fire burning ; stir up the grace that is in you ; watch against declension in prayer ; study the Word diligently ; be faithful to your King, and work and live for Him ; cherish a spirit of genuine, unfeigned love to your fellow-communicants. So shall you approve yourselves to be the Lord's. He will ever be with you, and set you before His face for ever.

PRAYER.

O LORD Jesus, the Hope of Thy people, I come to Thy Table, for Thou hast bidden me. Teach me ever to come aright. Send me the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to dwell in my heart. Give me the spirit of

wisdom and understanding, that I may know Thy truth. Fill me with the fear and love of Thy holy name.

Blessed Saviour, draw very near to me, and make this ordinance a means of blessing to my soul. Bring me into closer fellowship with Thyself. My soul cleaveth unto the dust. Oh, quicken me, that I may love Thee with my whole heart. Grant unto me the grace of the covenant which Thou hast made in Thy blood. Remember no more against me my sins and iniquities. Write Thy law in my heart, that I may not depart from Thee. Anoint me with an unction from above, and keep me faithful to Thee for ever by Thy mighty power. O Lord, I beseech Thee, bless those who draw near with me to Thy Table. Knit us together in Christian charity, and make us to love one another with a pure heart fervently. Stir up Thy faithful people, that they may abound in every good word and work.

Hear these my prayers, and when Thou hearest forgive, and do for us according to Thy mercy, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

V.

Condescension.

IN many ways does Christ, before His death, set forth His endless love to His own. The Supper is ended, but not the love that appoints it. He abides for a short season longer with the little flock, and strengthens for the coming trial ; He tells of the Father's house, of the Comforter's presence, of His own abiding with them, and of the peace which the world giveth not ; He gives them a sample of His future intercession in the prayer which He offers on their behalf. But in addition to this, we see Him performing an act of very peculiar kindness and condescension : He washes the feet of His disciples. I know nothing more touching in the whole story of our Lord's life, and the incident abounds in precious instruction for the faithful Communicant.

The Master leaves the Table. He girds Himself with a towel : He pours water into a

basin, and goes from one to another of that little company, washing their feet and wiping them with the towel wherewith He is girded.

Once we read of a sinful woman washing the feet of Christ with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head. But now it is the other way. It is not the sinner washing the feet of the Saviour, but the holy Saviour washing the feet of His sinful disciples. There was such an exceeding depth of tender, considerate kindness in the act. Christ was just entering upon the dark night of His Agony and Passion. Before His mind were Gethsemane, and the house of Caiaphas, and Pilate's judgment hall, and Calvary. Yet, in the presence of these unparalleled sorrows and sufferings, His heart is set upon showing kindness to those who followed Him. He will show them that He is mindful not only of their salvation, but of their comfort and refreshment.

Remember it, Christian, for Christ is still the same. He cares for thee in little matters as well as in great. Believe it, that in His sympathy and love He will bestow upon thee the lesser mercies of His providence as well as the greater blessings of His grace. Learn to bring to Him each want, each necessity. Though it

may seem trifling in the eye of others, He will not disregard thy petition.

But no less in this narrative do we see the depth of Christ's humility and condescension. He had said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart;" and again, "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am amongst you as he that serveth." And by this deed of love He shewed, how true were these sayings. He remembered at that hour the glory He had left, and to which He was about to return: He was fully conscious of the supreme authority with which the Father had invested Him, for He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands. Yet He stoops to this lowly deed of kindness.

It was the work of a slave boy, or of the lowest menial, to attend to the feet of the guests. So we read of Abigail expressing her willingness to serve David in any capacity: "Behold, let thy handmaid be a servant, to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord." (1 Sam. xxv. 41.) So we read of the Baptist reckoning himself unworthy "to unloose the latchet of Christ's shoe." Yet this position Christ willingly takes. He condescends to men

of low estate ; yea, and performs for them the very lowest office. Never before had Christ been so glorious in grace and in humility. The Lord of glory, the King of angels, the Worship of saints, stoops to wash the feet of a few poor Galilean fishermen. We read, in the Book of Revelation, of Christ being clothed in a garment of royal majesty, and girt about with a golden girdle. But in this laying aside His garment,—in this girding with a towel for such an act of love, is there not something more glorious still ? Never would the disciples forget that hour. All through their pilgrimage they would ever remember the touch of those gentle, loving hands. Nor should we forget it either. It abides recorded in the Word as an everlasting memorial of the humility of the Lord Jesus.

What a lesson for each true Communicant, for each sincere follower of the Lamb ! Let us speak to our own hearts as we ponder it : let us learn the life we ought to live.

Yea, if I be Christ's, I must learn of Him ; I must make Him my Pattern ; I must walk in His footsteps. Many a costly garment has been worn by the rich and great. But was ever any garment so beautiful as that towel—the token of the greatest humility the world had ever

seen? I, too, must be clothed with humility : I must watch against pride in any shape. Pride of dress, pride of personal appearance, pride of rank, or birth, or wealth, or gifts,—all this I must trample under my feet. I must sit down in the lowest room ; I must be willing to sacrifice my own right or position, when it may be for the glory of God or the good of His Church ; I must be lowly in service, willing to do any work to which my Lord may call me ; I must be willing that others should rise above me. If I would be greatest, I must be content to be the least. The violet is one of the most fragrant flowers ; but it grows low, and often hides itself from view. The ear of corn, when ripe and most precious, bends down its head to the ground. Great is the strength of humility. I read, in the old classic fable, of one whose strength was renewed whenever he touched the ground ; his enemy could only destroy him when he lifted him up high in the air. So Satan can only prevail when he can lift me up in pride. If only I be humble, he can never harm me. For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Great likewise is the reward of humility. It shall sit down in the highest mansion of the redeemed : it shall taste

even now the sweetest fruits of the Tree of Life.

But we find a break in the story. Peter stays for a moment the completion of Christ's work: his love, his zeal, his view of Christ's glory, yea, and his rashness and self-will come in: "Ah, it is too much. I the disciple, Thou the Master: I the sinner, Thou the Saviour. *Lord dost Thou wash my feet?*" There was much here that was commendable. But mingled with this, self was lurking beneath: "I know better than Christ. This act befits not Thy majesty or glory."

Christ answers very tenderly, as if He would say, "I have a purpose thou knowest not. Leave me alone to act as I think best. By-and-by I will explain it all. *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*"

Christian, learn the lesson our Lord teaches. You must not dictate to the All-wise: you must not interfere with His working. In the most unlikely ways He will fulfil His bright designs of mercy. By a path you know not and would never have chosen, He will perform that He has promised. Gladly leave all in His hands. Though it be the storm that wrecks thy treasure here, though it be the mystery you cannot fathom,

though it be the sorrow that well-nigh breaks thy heart, though it be a loss or a disappointment that blasts all thy fair prospects and makes life a desert, though it be the pain that calls forth many a groan,—yet in the future all will be clear, bright as day. He has led you forth by the right way, that you may go to the city of habitation.

In Peter's answer we see nothing but self-will. He sets his will against Christ's, and refuses to permit Him to fulfil the task He has chosen. In the original the language is very strong: "As long as the world lasts Thou shalt never wash my feet." Ah, bold and presumptuous speech! It was now all self,—self,—wretched self. But self must have a fall. Self-will is self-destruction. So Christ rebukes him sharply: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." As if he would say, "Then I must disown and reject you. Unless you yield to my will, you can no longer have part in my kingdom."

In a moment all is changed. The thought of being cast off is intolerable. "Nay, nay, this must never be. If this be the alternative, let Christ do as He will with me: let Him take me to the bath and wash me from head to foot. To be His, and His for ever,—this is all my

salvation and all my desire. *Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."*

Nay, there is no need. He that has been in the bath in the morning, needs at night but the washing of the feet from the dust that through the day may have clung to him.

"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

In this subject there yet lies in the background precious instruction as to the cleansing from sin. Meanwhile let us carry away the twofold lessons of humility and self-renunciation. We must rejoice to be nothing, and let Christ's will be supreme.

Renew my will from day to day,
Blend it with Thine, and take away
All that now makes it hard to say,
Thy will be done.

PRAYER.

O GOD, my Father, behold me in Thy mercy and loving-kindness. Give me the anointing of Thy Spirit, that I may perfectly know Thee, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. Lead me to the Saviour's footstool, and teach me to consider Him in His life and death.

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I thank Thee, O merciful Redeemer, for Thine endless love to Thy people: I thank Thee for stooping so low in Thy pity for Thy disciples. Thou art ever the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. O make me truly to believe in Thy care. In every trial and sorrow may I trust in Thee. Supply every want of my soul, and give me all that is profitable for me in this present life. Undertake for me in everything, both great and small; and in every hour of darkness make me patient, in hope of Thy coming and kingdom.

O God, grant me by Thy Spirit to follow in the footsteps of Christ. Give unto me the spirit of meekness and of true humility. Thou dwellest with the humble and contrite in heart; make me to be such indeed. Break down my pride, and lay low every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Thee. Make me more thoughtful for the wants of others, and willing to do for them that which lieth in me.

Help me, O Father, and fulfil my humble desires, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

VI.

Washed and Forgiven.

IN the lowly act of condescending love which Christ performed in the Upper room, I see another lesson for the consolation of the whole Church. It is a true and blessed type of His redeeming work. It tells me what as a sinner I so greatly need, and how the blessing may be mine. If I would indeed be a worthy Communicant, if I would by faith be nourished by the body once given for me, and drink to my soul's health that precious blood which was shed for me, I may learn the secret here. Let me then tarry for a while in the Upper room, and learn for my everlasting peace what my Lord would teach me.

I see here Everlasting Love stooping low to cleanse and sanctify His people. Christ lays aside His garments, taking the position of a servant. He takes the towel and the basin, and then washes His disciples' feet.

What was this but an emblem of His whole work? He came from heaven, He laid aside His Divine glory, and made Himself of no reputation; He took upon Himself man's nature, that He might live on earth as the servant of Jehovah,—yea, more, that He might work and suffer and die in the service of man. He humbled Himself to the death of the cross; He was contemned, pierced, bruised, smitten. And why? Was it not that He might cleanse and sanctify His Church, and present her at last, without spot or blemish, to the Father?

I see too the individual application of His redeeming work. He washes the feet of the disciples one by one. He goes to James and John, to Philip and Andrew and Peter, and the rest, and thus manifests His special, peculiar love to each. It is thus with Christ now: He deals with man each alone by himself. He takes them as He took the deaf man aside from the multitude. He saith to each one, as to Peter,—“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.”

Nor is this the reception of baptism by water: the rite may be duly administered, but the inward and spiritual grace altogether lacking.

Nor is it the washing of an outward reforma-

tion : certain sins in the life may be cast off, and yet the heart remain without any true spiritual renewal. The true washing which brings salvation is when the soul is led to heart-repentance and lively faith in Christ's finished work.

Christ awakens and convinces the soul of sin by the Holy Ghost. He leads the sinner to acknowledge his lost condition and to cry, Unclean : Unclean ! He leads him on to discover that there is no salvation but in Him, and that His precious blood-shedding is enough to remove every stain of guilt. Thus is he washed, justified, accepted, saved.

We read of Naaman laying aside his robes of state, and washing seven times in Jordan, and then his flesh is clean as a little child.

So the sinner comes down from the chariot of pride, and, casting off every vestige of self-glorying, is washed and cleansed perfectly in the precious blood.

It may be well to explain further what is intended by washing in the blood. Of course there is nothing material about it. If you could have been sprinkled with the blood which actually flowed from the crucified Saviour, it would profit you nothing : if it were possible, as some teach, that you could now, by a miraculous

change in the wine, drink of the same blood, it could be of no avail for the cleansing of the soul. The blood is the life. To be washed in the blood is to have the conscience purged by Christ's life being given instead of your's. He gave His life as the sacrifice for your sin, and the Father accepted this on your behalf. You rejoice in this, you place your full confidence in Christ alone and in His all-sufficient offering, and you are washed in His blood and for ever justified.

Mark this well, for it is the very hinge and turning-point of salvation. Your sin is ever before your eyes. Pride, selfishness, worldliness, ingratitude to your God and Saviour,—these and many other sins trouble and burden your conscience. But by-and-by the light shines further, and you see the value of Christ's work. You trust in Him who died in your stead : you cry to Him, "O Lord, I flee to the refuge of Thy mercy : I rely upon Thy death ; I cast myself upon Thy promise. Let Thy sufferings be instead of mine,—Thy death instead of my death. In Thee alone is my hope and salvation."

Dust and ashes is my name,
My all is sin and misery.
Friend of sinners, spotless Lamb,
Thy blood was shed for me.

Thus are you thoroughly cleansed from guilt. Your conscience is at rest. You have peace with God : you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It may be helpful to consider the perfection of this cleansing.

A beautiful thought is thrice given to us, with reference to it. It is compared to the snow as it comes from above : "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Is. i. 18.) "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Ps. li. 7.) "When the Almighty scattered kings for their sake, then were they as white as snow in Salmon." (Ps. lxxviii. 14. Prayer-book version.)

Look at that field on which the snow has lately fallen : everything is covered,—wrapped up in the fair mantle which has descended upon it. Clods of earth, stones, weeds, blades of grass,—all are hidden, not one is to be seen. In every direction nothing scarcely can be seen but the pure, white snow.

And is it not thus with thee, believer, in the sight of God? God looks upon thee in Christ, as if thou hadst never sinned. Thine earthliness, thy hardness, thy follies, thy mistakes, sins, failings, thine ingratitude and utter un-

worthiness,—all are alike forgiven and forgotten ; and you stand before God in the Divine righteousness of the Son of God, perfectly justified in Him from all charge and accusation of evil.

Mark likewise the exceeding beauty of the newly-fallen snow. It fringes the branches of the leafless trees, and forms a canopy over the evergreens : it makes often a sort of terrace over the roofs of our houses and trees, and traces many a fantastic outline in our gardens. Scarcely any natural object has more beauty than sometimes we have seen in the snow, especially when the sun has just risen upon it.

And is there not precious truth to be found here ? If trusting only in the Saviour,—if His righteousness and blood be upon you by faith, then are you fair and beautiful in God's sight. True, in yourself there is nothing but defilement. Yet, as one with Christ, you are perfect through His comeliness which He hath put upon you. The beauty of the Lord God is upon you : the Sun of Righteousness has arisen with healing in His wings, and your Father delighteth in you ; yea, and rejoices over you with joy and singing.

Side by side with this perfect cleansing of justification, Christ renews and sanctifies the

soul that trusteth in Him. He purifies the heart by faith ; He makes the Word effectual by the Spirit, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; He transforms the character, mortifying the love of sin and making the believer desire above all things to be holy and like the Saviour.

“Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head.” The Christian would have every member consecrated to the Lord’s service and freed from the power of evil.

O Lord, Thy heavenly grace impart,
And fix my frail, inconstant heart.
Henceforth my chief desire shall be
To dedicate myself to Thee,—
To Thee, my God, to Thee.

The story of the Upper Chamber teaches me yet another lesson of great moment.—The believer needs daily renewal and daily cleansing. He abides in a state of justification ; yet, for the peace of his conscience, for abiding in fellowship with God, for the maintenance of humility and self-abasement, he needs daily to confess sin, and daily to experience afresh the cleansing power of His blood.

The traveller, though in the bath at the commencement of the day, yet needs at night

the dust washed off from the feet. Thus the pardoned, justified believer needs daily to be cleansed afresh from the sin and evil which he may have contracted.

In a large Hotel, in Sweden, "the day's reckoning" was placed at night on the bed-room door. So the Christian should night by night recall the faults and failings of the day, and then bring them for pardon to the Saviour.

Christian, go often to thy Saviour. Let nothing be permitted to remain on the conscience. When a still, small voice tells you of sin, however small it may seem, look at once to Christ for pardon and deliverance. Keep close to Him, and ever look to Him for the cleansing that you need.

One thought more. Let every believer be unwearied in praise and gratitude for the inestimable benefit of salvation through the blood. In words not my own I would remind you of the spirit that should be cherished by every child of God :

"I confess that to me there is nought in all creation so precious as the blood of Christ. I would rather part with all I have, than part with what I have in this precious blood. I have found in the blood of Christ pardon, and peace,

and everlasting felicity, and blessings, and gifts, —too vast, too numerous to estimate. I look *inward* upon this sin-polluted heart, and by this blood I see all my guilt removed. I look *backward* on my sin-stained life, which cries justly for vengeance ; and by this blood I see my sins expiated, and the cry of accusation silenced for ever. I look *forward* to the hour of death, when a lifetime's sins might compass me about in crowding legions ; but I see them all scattered and dispersed like a summer cloud,—all by this precious blood. I look *downward* into the dark pit, where wrath and wretchedness are mingled in the sinner's doom,—my own just and proper doom ; but in this blood I find the ransom that delivers me from the wrath to come. I look *upward*,—upward to the pure and hallowed scenes of heaven, to the throne of God and the abode of spotless angels ; and by that blood I find a title full and sufficient, by which I shall enter into the heaven of heavens."

"Heaven, it seems to me, has no song loud enough, sweet enough to celebrate the praises of Him who shed this blood. It is the song of the saved on earth : 'Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood.' It is the song of the redeemed in heaven,—the com-

pany who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: 'For Thou art worthy: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.'"

Glory be to Jesus,
Who, in bitter pains,
Poured for me the life-blood
From His sacred veins.

Grace and life eternal
In that blood I find.
Blest be His compassion,
Infinitely kind.

PRAYER.

O MERCIFUL God, who wouldest not the death of the sinner, I thank Thee for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world: I thank Thee for salvation through the death of Christ, and for all the benefits purchased for me by His blood. O Father, I am verily guilty before Thee. I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight; I have broken Thy laws; I have forgotten Thy love; I have been ungrateful for Thy rich and abounding mercies. But I come to Thee for the pardon

Thou hast promised. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity in the Fountain which has been opened for sinners; forgive all the sins that are past, and reckon them no more against me; cleanse me from all my present failings and infirmities, and cover me with the spotless robe of Christ; sprinkle me day by day with the atoning blood, and make me to hate the sins which crucified my Lord.

I pray Thee, O Father, make me henceforth to be wholly Thine. I am not my own, for Thou hast bought me with a price. Help me to praise and bless Thee with joyful heart, and to yield myself entirely to Thee. May every member be given up to Thy service. In health and in sickness, in life and in death, may I glorify Thy holy name, and do that which is pleasing in Thy sight.

O Lord Jesus, do Thou ever plead for me, and obtain for me an answer of peace. Keep me from all evil, and preserve me blameless to Thy kingdom. "By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy cross and passion, by Thy precious death and burial, by Thy glorious resurrection and ascension, good Lord deliver me." Amen.

VII.

“Dark Gethsemane.”

IT were well for the faithful Communicant often to frequent this sacred spot. It was a garden to which Jesus oftentimes resorted with His disciples. And as in quiet thought and meditation we go thither also, we may learn in His name to overcome the Tempter and to be partakers of His sufferings.

Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the Tempter's power :
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with Him one bitter hour,
Turn not from His griefs away,
Learn from Him to watch and pray.

Jesus had loved the stillness, the retirement, the loneliness of Gethsemane. What hours of peaceful communion did He there enjoy with His Father in heaven ! What blessed repose for His wearied spirit did He there find, after

the noise of the city and the strife of tongues !
The contradiction of sinners, the sights and
sounds of evil around, the mistakes, the failings,
the slowness of the disciples,—all these must
often have pained and distressed Him. But He
found refreshment in solitude. Alone, with
His Father, He found peace and consolation.

And you, believer, may do so likewise : you
may find joy and comfort in some secret pavilion
of your Father's presence. Go alone, and shut
thy door, forbid worldly scenes, and, as far as
possible, worldly thoughts to intrude ; and there,
in conscious nearness to thy Saviour and thy
God, look up for strength to maintain thy war-
fare with the powers of evil.

And if you have a garden, or some retired
nook to which you can go away from the crowd,
away from the haunts of men, hallow it by
meditation and prayer.

The calm retreat, the quiet shade,
With prayer and praise agree ;
And seem, by Thy sweet bounty, made
For those who follow Thee.

There, if Thy Spirit touch the soul
And grace her mean abode,
Oh, with what joy and peace and love
She communes with her God !

“Blessed Redeemer, when I am in a garden may I remember the ardent love Thou didst show in Gethsemane! May the labours and enjoyment of a garden be sanctified by this recollection! O Thou heavenly Husbandman, happy is the heart which is Thy garden, watered by Thy blood. O break the rocks, root out the thorns, and make my heart a fruitful soil. Sow the good seed of Thy Word therein; water it with Thy grace; shine on it, thou Sun of Righteousness; blow on it with the soft gales of Thy Spirit, that the spices thereof may flow forth.”

Eden and Gethsemane, each a garden: but what a contrast do they present! In the one Adam tastes the fruit which was good for food and pleasant to the eye; and, in doing so, brought on himself and his posterity the bitterness of sorrow, shame, and death. In the other the second Adam begins to taste the bitter cup of woe and anguish, that His Church might reap the fruits of endless joy and life everlasting. From Eden Adam goes forth as a culprit, under the severe rebuke and judgment of the God whose command he had disobeyed. From Gethsemane Christ goes forth, bold as a lion, to face Caiaphas and Pilate and the chief priests,

to bring in deliverance and everlasting Righteousness for all His spiritual seed.

But let me draw nigh : let me behold this wondrous sight. If Moses took off his shoe when the Lord came near at the burning bush, still more should I regard Gethsemane as holy ground.

I see the Redeemer of mankind prostrate on the cold earth : I hear a groan, a sorrowful complaint. Never before has Christ complained but for the sin, and impenitence, and unbelief of those around. But now it is otherwise. There is deep soul agony ; there is sore dismay ; there is darkness that may be felt.

In a vision, a horror of great darkness fell on Abraham, foretelling the bondage of his seed. For three days a strange, mysterious darkness fell upon Egypt. Dark and gloomy was the shadow cast by those olive trees in the Garden. But a deeper darkness overshadowed the Spirit of the Saviour. Well might He employ the language of the Psalmist : " Fearfulness and trembling have come upon Me, and a horrible dread hath overwhelmed Me."

For this hour He had come into the world : for this hour He had lived and prayed. To enter upon His work He had eagerly trodden

the path to Jerusalem, going before His disciples so hastily that they were astonished. But now He starts back from the path He hath chosen. At least there is a solemn pause ere He advances. His soul is amazed and very heavy. He prays in an agony. The conflict is great, and His sweat is as drops of blood falling to the ground.

Who can pierce the darkness? Who can tell the secret of that hour? Who can explain the cause of that mysterious agony?

Was it the last struggle with the great adversary? In the wilderness He had met the Tempter, and thrice had triumphed. When Peter would have Him put aside the cross, He discerned the Tempter's form: "Get thee behind Me, Satan," and at once rejected the thought. Is it now the final struggle?

Or is it that, in some way altogether beyond our thought,—sin, our sin,—the sin of the world, is touching the Holy One? Is it the guilt of mankind oppressing our Surety,—the judgment and the wrath we had merited descending upon Him? Who shall answer? Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Rather let us worship and adore.

"O sinless Lamb, O Lord Jesus, I bow before

Thee, and praise Thee for Thy love! What marvels do I behold! 'Thou, the source of all joy, art borne down with heavy sorrow; Thou, the source of all comfort, dost faint for lack of it; Thou, the Fountain of Life, dost wrestle with death; Thou, the highest Majesty, before whom Principalities and Powers do bow, bowest down Thyself to the earth before Thy Father; Thou, before Whom cherubim and seraphim do veil their faces, dost lie in the dust and tread the winepress of wrath for man."

Ah, may I learn here the fearful reality of sin? Sin, sin: what hast thou done! This is thy work. Never, but for sin, should we have seen the holy, spotless Saviour thus enduring unspeakable sorrows: never, but for sin, would Christ have drunk the cup of suffering, wrath, and death. Can it be a light thing which cost the Son of God such groans, such tears, such dismay?

O that I may abhor the faintest shadow of evil: O that I may shrink from the least taint of this deadly thing. Who can utter all that sin hath done? The whole creation groans beneath the burden. Countries are filled with cruelty and oppression. Homes are made wretched by its power. Ten thousand times

ten thousand hearts it has crushed and broken. On account of it, myriads of death-beds have been without one ray of hope, and unnumbered souls have perished eternally.

But chiefest of all,—who can tell the woe, the anguish, the misery it brought upon the Son of God? May God give me His grace, that I may hate it with perfect hatred, mourn over it with godly sorrow, and flee from it as the greatest and only evil!

But I would learn from Gethsemane a lesson of prayer. It was our Lord's command to His disciples, as they entered it: "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." But they fail. Some little solace would it have been to the Saviour in His agony, had He found them earnest in pleading for themselves, and in true sympathy with Him in His hour of sorrow. But not so. What do we find?—The Son of God in an agony; Satan, with his artillery, preparing to attack the Shepherd and His flock; the enemies of Christ awake, and close at hand to bind Him and carry Him away to Annas; and the disciples asleep. Poor, frail man! well is it that thou hast a pitiful and compassionate Saviour! Whilst He rebukes, He yet is ready to excuse and forgive. "Could ye not watch

with Me one hour?" "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Truly doth Christ fulfil that which was spoken of Him: "A bruised reed will He not break, nor quench the smoking flax."

But whilst the disciples fail, Christ fails not; and His prayer may well teach us how to pray.

Let me copy His lowly reverence. Christ fell on the ground as He prayed; and let me bend low before my Father in heaven,—let there be the attitude as well as the spirit of true devotion. In the house of God, and in the secret chamber, it is right to bend as we pour out our confessions and prayers before the Mercy Seat.

Let me copy the fervency of Christ's prayer. I would be distinct, and hearty, and real, in whatever I desire and ask of God. Whatever be my request,—the removal of trial, the bestowment of temporal good, the forgiveness of sin, more grace and power in the Spirit,—whatever it be, I would realize my urgent need, and ask for it with earnest and heartfelt longings. In the power of the Spirit, let prayer be prayer indeed. No mere utterance of words can be accepted as prayer by Him who ever looketh on the heart.

Let me catch, too, the filial confidence which is seen in Christ's prayer. I want the humility of a sinner, joined with the happy confidence of a little child. As one with Christ, accepted and highly favoured in the beloved, I may go before God, crying, "Abba, Father!" Even in seasons of deepest distress, I shall find peace whilst clinging fast to a Father's hand, resting in a Father's love, and telling out every care and trouble in a Father's ear.

But with this there must be perfect submission. We must be willing to drink the cup even to the dregs, if our Father's will be so. We must not rebel or repine, if the petition is answered otherwise than we have desired. We must say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." That will is love; that will is unerring wisdom; that will is covenant faithfulness and truth; that will is our everlasting peace and glory: and, therefore, we must be still.

I would lie still :
Do Thou Thy holy will.

And we must continue and persevere. We mark the thrice-repeated petition: we hear the same words yet again and again, till the conflict

is over. So must we pray always, and not faint. My Father hears my first cry for help ; yet He would have me pray on, though I see not how my petition is answered.

Large and abundant answers shall reward those who are constant and persevering in prayer. "Though the vision tarry, wait for it. It will surely come : it will not tarry."

For Christ's prayer was heard : an angel was sent to strengthen Him. And in going forth so calmly, so willingly to the scene of trial and of death, His request was plainly fulfilled : the Father's will was done, and He rejoiced to do it. "The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

So, too, shall our desires be accepted and our prayers be fulfilled in the very best way. We have an example in the Apostle Paul. Very beautiful is the parallel between Gethsemane and the narrative given in 2 Cor. xii. Three times did Paul pray for the removal of the thorn,—yet it remained ; but grace was promised and was given : "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And the Apostle is content ; yea, more than content : he believes the promise, and glories in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest

upon Him. Thus may we rest in God's dealings,
and be assured that His way, not our's, is best.

Lamb of God, to Thee I cry !
By Thy bitter agony,
By Thy pangs to us unknown,
By Thy Spirit's parting groan,
Lord, Thy presence let me see,
Manifest Thyself to me.

Prince of life, to Thee I cry !
By Thy glorious majesty, ,
By Thy triumph o'er the grave,
Meek to suffer, strong to save,
Lord, Thy presence let me see,
Manifest Thyself to me.

Lord of glory, God most high,
Man exalted to the sky,—
With Thy love my bosom fill,
Prompt me to perform Thy will :
Then Thy glory I shall see,
Thou wilt bring me home to Thea.

VIII.

The Crown of Thorns.

IT was a new and strange device. The Roman soldiers take a prickly shrub, and weave together a few slender branches in the shape of a garland, and place it on the head of Jesus. A little before this our Lord had been scourged : the stripes which our sins deserved had fallen upon Him. But very soon and His hands and feet will be pierced with nails, and the head of Christ has now its wounds also. That head so often bowed with grief for another's woe,—that head which received from Mary's loving hand the precious ointment—now has, from the rough, unfeeling hands of the soldiery, this strange coronation. The cruel thorns pierce His brow, and there flows afresh the blood which redeems a lost world from sin.

We have it in our hymn :—

Is there diadem, as Monarch,
Which His brow adorns ?
Yea, a crown in very surety,—
But of thorns !

H

And again :—

O sacred head ! once wounded,
With grief and shame bowed down ;
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns,—Thine only crown !
O sacred head ! what glory,
What bliss till now was Thine ;
Yea, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine !

A Crown of Thorns ! It took but a few moments to make : it was a token of contempt on the part of the soldiers. Yet would I prize it far more than any crown of human glory ; for it tells me of Christ, and His grace and love : it opens out to me fresh views of His work ; it brings me nearer to the Saviour whom I love.

A Crown of Thorns ! Let me be reminded of Paradise. When sin entered, the curse came ; and, as a mark of it, the earth brought forth thorns and thistles. But Jesus had His crown of thorns, for He took upon Himself the curse. He was made a curse for our sake, that to us the blessing might come. His precious blood hath washed the earth from its curse, so that to all who are in Him its fruits might come in blessing. Yea, by-and-by they shall have their part in the new heaven and the new earth,

where there is no more curse, but wherein dwelleth righteousness!

A Crown of Thorns! It well points out the path of Jesus as "the Man of Sorrows." We have here and there a thorn that pierces the foot as we journey along our pilgrimage: we cannot escape it if we would.

There are briars besetting every path,
Which call for patient care :
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer.

Paul had his thorn in the flesh; and each Christian, ever since Paul's day, has had one too,—perhaps many. But Christ alone had *the crown of thorns*; for He was the King of sufferers,—the chiefest amongst all the children of sorrow and affliction. Ah, this shall be my refuge in days of trouble! Should my head be racked with pain,—should it be fevered and restless through disease, or be wearied with anxiety and care, I will think of the thorn-crowned Saviour. I will remember that in all my affliction He was afflicted, and that He can feel for me in the least or in the greatest sorrows. I will remember, too, that the thorns He wore extracted the pain from mine. For to Him they came as part of the great propitiation,

for man's guilt; but to me pain and sorrow come as wholesome discipline, to heal the diseases of my soul. Thus the sight of Christ wearing His crown of thorns, shall confirm my faith in His sympathy, and shall enable me more patiently to bear my cross.

A Crown of Thorns! "Despised and rejected of men." He enters into Jerusalem honoured by the multitude who throng around Him. There is something like a day of triumph. The people greet Him as a King. They cut down branches and straw them in the way: they cast their garments beneath His feet. Young and old cry, "Hosanna!" and salute Him as David's royal Son.

But a few days have passed, and all is changed. The fickle crowd have joined His enemies, and the soldiers mock His kingly pretensions. Hence the crown of thorns; hence the purple robe,—some cast-off rag of royalty; hence the reed put into His hand in place of a sceptre. Yea, and they bow the knee in scorn, and cry, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

"You, Galilean,—a King! You, doomed to die as a malefactor,—a King! No palace, no throne, no army,—yet a King!"

Thus they dishonour the Son of God. And

He bore it all without a murmur, or an angry word. Let Him but move the hand, but utter a word, but will it in His heart, and the whole host of them had perished as Sennacherib's army.

Strange and marvellous forbearance. Oh! that I could learn the lesson, and be more gentle, forgiving, and patient towards those who wrong or reproach me!

A Crown of Thorns! What was this but an acted prophecy of glory yet to come? The crown of thorns foreshadows the crown of glory; yea, the many crowns that Messiah shall wear!

"I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud sat one like unto the Son of Man, having on His head *a golden crown*." (Rev. xiv. 14.) "Behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war, . . . and on His head were *many crowns*." (Rev. xix. 11, 12.)

History tells of a Roman Consul who brought back from Macedonia four hundred golden crowns from the kingdoms and cities he had subdued. But more than these shall be the crowns of our Emmanuel. The Crown of creating power and wisdom, the Crown of providence, the Crown of earth and heaven, the Crown of universal

dominion, the Crown of a glorious redemption, the Crown of victory over death and hell defeated, —all these shall grace the head of Him who shall be owned by all as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Nor these alone ; for of the great multitude before the throne, not one but shall place on His head the crown of their salvation. It is His victory, and not their's. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us ; but unto Thy name give the praise, for Thy glory and Thy truth's sake !"

Meanwhile, till that day shall come, let us learn our duty and our privilege.

Unpardoned, unsaved one, crown the Saviour by giving Him the glory of saving you. Perhaps a Communicant, and yet in no wise a partaker of Christ ; having a name to live, and yet dead, you are not happy, for you have not yet found peace with God. But why tarry thus, when salvation is brought so nigh ? Why not give unto Christ the joy of saving you ? You think, perchance, that He would not save one so dead in heart, so void of all good as yourself. But will He not do it for His own sake, if you turn to Him ? Only trust His mercy and love. Put the crown on the head of free grace. Glorify Him by relying, without a doubt, on His promise and His precious blood. Because you are unworthy, will

He refuse Himself the joy of bringing home the lost one to the fold? Will not the greatness of your sin magnify the greatness of His saving mercy?

Nay, do not wrong Him by your doubt and unbelief! Because your sins are many and great, *will you add yet another*,—that of questioning His willingness and power to save even to the uttermost?

But there is a word for the Lord's own people. Christian, crown the Saviour by your unlimited confidence. Trust Him always, and under all circumstances. Keep back nothing from Him, but leave everything in His hand. Let your fellow-Christians see that your faith in Him is a reality, and brings you support and comfort in the most adverse seasons. Make Him your Hiding-place in the day of trouble. Bring to Him day by day your wants and your worries, your cares and your fears, and leave them in His hand. Let every fresh temptation or trouble give you a fresh errand to His mercy-seat. Take the key of promise, and then, by the hand of faith, you can open wide the treasury of His boundless grace. Lean your weakness upon His strength, and in every conflict look to Him to put your adversary to flight.

Crown Him by joyful songs of praise and thanksgiving. Since He is never weary of blessing, never tire of praising and magnifying His name. Give thanks always for all things in His name. Stir up your heart perpetually in this blessed exercise. Every note of praise, every breath of thanksgiving, every remembrance of His loving-kindness and mercy brings honour to His name, and is pleasing and acceptable in His sight.

Crown Him by yielding yourself entirely and in everything to His rule and direction. Let Jesus be King indeed. Open wide to Him the gate of your heart, and let Him rule in every department of your life. Let His will be law. Submit to His sway, and own Him Lord and Master. Where you shall go and what you shall do, what vineyard-work you shall undertake, what friendships you shall form, what engagements you shall make and what decline, what joys or sorrows may be your lot,—leave all to Him, and desire only to know and do and suffer all His holy will.

So shall He lead you in the paths of peace and holiness, and give you at length the crown of life, purchased for you by His bitter and painful Crown of Thorns.

PRAYER.

O LORD Jesus, by all Thy pain and suffering, by all the scorn Thou didst endure, I pray Thee save me, and make me faithful in Thy service. Teach me to prize Thee and Thy crown of thorns more than all the world can offer me. Reveal Thyself to me in all Thy majesty and grace, that I may ever bow before Thee with deepest reverence.

Thou lowly King of peace, hold out to me the sceptre of Thy love, and let me draw near and touch it by faith. Thou wert clothed with a purple robe, in shame and contempt. O do Thou clothe me with the garments of salvation, and adorn me with the beauty of Thy holy character.

O Lord, may I behold and see the glory of Thy love. May I place my salvation in Thy hands, and do Thou speak peace to my soul: may I trust Thee without a doubt, and cast upon Thee every trial and trouble, knowing that Thou carest for me! Prepare my heart to welcome Thee at Thy return. May I behold Thee, with joy, wearing the golden crown; and do Thou, at that day, accept me to reign with Thee for ever. Blessed Jesus, hear my prayer, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

IX.

The Love of the Cross.

ON leaving the harbour and setting out on a sea voyage in my early days, my ear was struck with the sailor's cry, "Ten fathoms deep," "Twenty fathoms deep," and so on, as they sounded the depth of water through which the ship was passing. By-and-by the cry ceases: they reach the deep water where they need sound no longer. And so it is with the love of Christ: it is a deep we cannot reach. Who can fathom it? Who can conceive it? Who can express it? The Apostle can only stand on the shore and bid us pray, that we may know its height and depth and breadth and length. And then he tells us that "it passeth knowledge." But let us dwell upon this heavenly theme. The faithful Communicant will love to ponder it; for in doing so he will learn more of Christ, and trust Him more, and love Him more, and possess Him more fully as his own everlasting Friend.

The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, will be ready to enlighten and teach us ; for it is His special office to take of the things of Christ and show them to His people.

He died for sinners. Not for the good and worthy, but for the lost and perishing did He lay down His precious life. When we had no strength to do right or to keep God's holy law, when we willingly went astray, when our evil hearts hated the God of love, when we were rebels and enemies against the great King, then He loved us and died for us, and by His death opened to us the gate of everlasting life. Ah, here is one depth,—a marvellous depth : love, pity, salvation, for the ungodly and for sinners ! Need I doubt whether He died for me ? Nay, surely, for I am a sinner, and more sinful than tongue can tell ; and as a sinner only, I go to Him and trust in Him. And I would know and feel this more and more : so I go to His mercy-seat for the broken and contrite heart that becomes a guilty one like me.

But what a death He died ! To die a common death for others were love, but He died ten thousand deaths in one. I have read of a soldier giving a cup of water on the battle-field to a dying comrade, and losing his life for his kindness ; for

a shell burst near the spot where he was tarrying, and he was killed. Here was kindness and love : here was life sacrificed for another's good. But the suffering was short. Death came in a moment, and the faithful friend was gone.

But not so in the death of Christ. Wave upon wave, depth upon depth of woe, unknown and unutterable, did He experience for our sakes. And was not each depth of woe an evidence of the marvellous depth of His love toward us?

There are four great depths in our Lord's Passion ; and, as we look down into each, though it is but a little way, may He teach us something of the ocean-depths of His redeeming love!

I think of all He suffered in the flesh during those long hours of the night and day, between His apprehension in the garden and the yielding up His Spirit to His Father on the cross.

How was that sinless body tormented with cruel anguish ! I see those hands, ever stretched out to bless, now pierced with nails ; I see those feet, which ever went about doing good, carrying consolation and healing to the sad and suffering, now transfixed to the cross ; I see that brow, so full of holy benevolence, now covered with blood ; I see the scourging, and the weariness,

and those parched lips, and those hours of bitter agony, as life slowly ebbed away. Ah, the suffering and the love it manifested ! Who shall tell what it was ?

In my hours of pain and sickness, let me ever look back to Calvary ! As I trust in Him, shall I not regard the suffering that may be appointed me as light beside His ; and not now the punishment of my sin, but rather the chastening of a Father's hand ?

But I see another depth in those sufferings. What shame, what scorn and mockery and indignity did Christ willingly endure ! He is taken as a thief, with swords and staves ; He stands for whole hours as a prisoner before vile and wretched men ; He is buffeted,—yea, He hides not His face from shame and spitting. His very deeds of mercy are cast in His teeth. A murderer and a robber is chosen, instead of Him—the Prince of glory. Oh, what a depth of love do I see in the endurance of all this ! How hard do I find it to bear a word of reproach for His sake ! How a slight, a cutting remark, a look, wounds and pains me ! How great the trial is to any honourable and upright man to be taken for a defrauder, and to be contemned by those who formerly had him in honour ! And

what must it have been to the Son of God, who had been honoured and worshipped by the Holy angels above, to be the scorn of men, the outcast of the people?

In this depth of shame, may I not see a vast deep of redeeming love?

I see yet another depth. Let me think of the desolation of Christ in those dark hours. How forcible are the words spoken of Him in the prophetic Psalm,—Ps. lxi. 20: "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none."

We think of David at Ziklag: his wives and children captive in the hands of the Amalekites, his abode laid waste, and all his friends turning against him and speaking of stoning him.

We think of Jeremiah sitting down amidst the ruins of the city, alone and desolate, lamenting the loss of the sons and daughters of Zion.

But no desolation was ever like that of Christ. He was hated and rejected by His own nation. Their chief men unite for His destruction. One of the twelve betrays Him to them. Another of the twelve, in the very midst of His trial, denies Him thrice. The rest all

forsake Him and flee. Where are those who have been healed by Him? Where are those who have been comforted and instructed by His words of love? Not one will now stand up for Him, and plead His cause: not one will show the kindness and sympathy that might, in some measure, have alleviated His heavy sorrows.

But chiefest of all these, was that exceeding great and bitter cry, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACH THANI!"

Ah, this forsaking of God, this hiding of the light of heaven,—this was far more than all! Here was desolation indeed? Forsaken of man,—this were much. But forsaken of God, as to the comfort of His presence, as to the sweet assurance of His love,—this were above all things terrible. And with this we couple another depth—all the soul-anguish that came to Him through our sin. Here is that which we cannot conceive or tell.

The travail of His soul in the work of atonement, in taking upon Him our guilt and condemnation, in making amends to Divine justice for a broken law,—all this is in a region which no eye of man hath seen, and no foot of man hath trodden; so that here, most of all, we see the love incomprehensible, passing all know-

ledge. Oh, to bear such desolation of spirit, to drink such a cup of soul-anguish for our salvation,—what can it mean? how can it be?

Jesus, the sinner's Friend,
We cannot speak Thy praise :
No mortal voice can sing the song
That ransomed hearts would raise !

One thought more.—We see the marvels of this love in the purpose of it all. It is for our forgiveness, our deliverance from all condemnation, our acceptance as dear children of a Father in heaven. Innumerable are the benefits purchased for us by the precious bloodshedding of the Son of God, and on every one of them we see inscribed the love that endured so great things for us.

Where else could such love have been found? What earthly friend would have thus sacrificed himself, to obtain peace and life and salvation for us?

A few words, once spoken by the late Sir James Simpson, of Edinburgh, before a large number of his fellow-citizens, put it in a very telling way. This excellent man, laden with honours for his discoveries in medical science, late in life attained the still higher honour of

rejoicing in the privilege of a son of God. Let us hear his words:—

“When I was a student at the University, I saw a sight I never can forget,—a man brought out to die. His arms were pinioned, his face already pale as death: thousands of eager eyes were upon him as he came up from the jail. ‘Did any friend come up and loose the rope, and say, Put it round my neck?’ No: he underwent the penalty of the law! ‘For many offences?’ No,—for one offence: he had stolen money from a stage coach! He broke the law in one point, and died for it. It was the penalty of a changing human law: the last instance of death for that offence.

“But I saw another sight: it matters not when—myself a sinner, standing on the brink of ruin, deserving nought but hell. ‘For *one* sin?’ No: for many, many sins committed against the unchanging laws of God. But again I looked, and saw Jesus, my Substitute, scourged in my stead and dying on the cross for me. I looked, I cried, and I was forgiven.”

Oh, that each Communicant may truly see this great love, and more fervently love Him who first loved us!

It is a privilege beyond all price that we *may*

love Christ,—that we may have an object that will never disappoint our affections.

He who once died for us is now our living Redeemer, still retaining all the love He had for us when on earth ; and, in the power of His endless love, giving us a safe resting-place for our longing hearts. It is well to set our love on the changeless, ever-living Friend. Let me lean most on a child of man,—on husband, or wife, or other of those around me,—and in an hour I may lose my treasure ; and my heart's affections will be like ivy trailing on the ground, when the tree on which it grew has fallen. But let me lean only on Christ, let my heart cleave intensely to Him ; and I shall never lose the One dearest to me, the One who alone can satisfy my soul for ever.

“The love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead : and that He died for all, that they which live should no longer live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.” (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.)

Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my
stand,—

The shadow of a mighty Rock, within a weary land :
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat and the
burden of the day.

O safe and happy shelter, O refuge tried and sweet,
O trysting-place where heaven's love and heaven's
justice meet.
As to the holy Patriarch that wondrous dream was
given,
So seems my Saviour's cross to me a ladder up to
heaven.

Upon the cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One who suffered there for
me ;
And from my smitten heart, with tears, two wonders
I confess,—
The wonders of His glorious love, and my own
unworthiness.

I stand beneath its shadow, as my abiding place :
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His
face.
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor
loss,—
My sinful self, my only shame ; my glory all, the
cross.

PRAYER.

O BLESSED and merciful Redeemer, I would come to Thy footstool. Draw me, and I will run after Thee. Reveal to me Thy heart of love, and make the light of Thy countenance to shine upon me. O send me Thy Spirit to lead me into the fuller knowledge of Thyself.

I thank Thee, O gracious Saviour, for laying down Thy life for my sake ; I thank Thee for the pain, and mockery, and desolation of heart Thou didst willingly endure ; I thank Thee for drinking to the very dregs the bitter cup of holy wrath, which my sins deserved ; I thank Thee for all wondrous benefits Thou hast thus purchased for me. O that Thou wouldest make my heart Thy dwelling-place, and fill me with Thy love. I bless Thee, that I may love Thee ; and that in loving Thee, my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. O make me love Thee more and more continually. May Thy love constrain me to live to Thy glory. Crucify within me all selfishness and self-will, and teach me to serve Thee and do Thy will. Make me like Thyself,—meek and gentle and loving unto all men. Fulfil these my desires, and make me wholly Thine, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

X.

Self-searching Beneath The Cross.

TO be right with God is the main desire of each faithful Communicant. To have a single eye, to be genuine and true-hearted in serving the Master, to keep a conscience void of offence,—such will ever be your object if you have known the grace of God in truth. And for this there needs self-scrutiny,—an honest wish to know what you are, and what are your failures. “Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.) “How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.” (Job xiii. 23.) “That which I see not teach Thou me : if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.” (Job xxxiv. 32.)

Such prayers and desires as these will often arise in the heart where the Spirit of God dwells.

For many reasons it is our truest wisdom frequently to speak to ourselves as to the path we are treading, and to lay bare our inmost thoughts before the eye of the most High.

Let me remember the sinfulness, the deceitfulness, the treachery of the human heart. It has its countless lurking places of evil. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." (Prov. xxviii. 26.)

Let me remember that sin concealed shuts the ear of God to prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." (Ps. lxvi. 18.)

Let me remember that undiscovered evil is the root of all the terrible falls of professing Christians. The sin has been permitted to take up its abode within, and then by and by breaks out in the form of some gross and open transgression. Secret sins lead to presumptuous sins. (Ps. xix. 12, 13.) It is like a fire smouldering in some secret recess or hidden flue which at length bursts forth, burning down the house, perhaps causing the death of some of those within. It is like the snake concealed in the grass, and yet whose bite is deadly.

I will remember too the ingratitude of sin. It is rebellion against the King who tenderly

loves those beneath his sway. When an Emperor of Russia, whose life had been devoted to the good of his subjects, heard of an insurrection in a distant province of his realm, he heaved a sigh, and said, "They do not know me." If men but knew the love and mercy of our God they would be ashamed to reject His authority and trample His laws beneath their feet.

But sin is not only rebellion against a King, but it is turning against the kindest parent. It is like the sin of Absalom who was plotting against his father's life whilst his father was giving charge to his men of war not to touch a hair of his head. Our Father is kind and forbearing to the unthankful and the evil, and yet men forsake His laws and, if they could, would cast His throne down to the ground.

I will remember also the infection of sin. It spreads far and wide. As a man going about with some infectious distemper might easily convey it to hundreds and thousands around; so is it with the sinner. Any cherished sin may prove fatal to others as well as to myself. My example may prove injurious to very many with whom I mingle. "O that I could bury my influence with me," said a young man on his death-bed, who grieved over the evil he could never undo.

Neither may I forget that whether or no I am careful to search myself, God searches me through and through. "All things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv. 13.)

The remembrance of all this will be helpful to me : it will quicken me in this duty ; it will make me really anxious to know the uttermost of the evil that is in me ; it will bring me low before the mercy-seat, in true confession and humiliation for my sin.

But what is the right position for this ? Not before the eye of a fellow-creature ; not beneath the awful heights of Sinai, but beneath the cross of Christ shall I best learn to know my sin aright.

For in the presence of Him who was crucified for me I learn how fearful is the character of sin. It is the knife that slew my best friend ; it is the nail that pierced His hand ; the spear that wounded His side ; it is the scourge that bruised Him ; the thorn that marked His brow. With this sight before me, let me hate my sin with deadly hatred ; let me never cloke or excuse it, though in the most subtle form ; let me abhor the very shadow, the very approach of evil ; let me keep at the utmost distance from that which crucified my Lord. And in thus desiring to

know my sin and its exceeding evil, there is a thought of consolation. I need not lose my peace because I cannot always grieve for sin as I would. Perhaps I feel that the language of the Confession with reference to past sins,—“the remembrance of them is grievous, the burden intolerable,”—goes beyond that which I can realize. But the Lord knows my desire, and He accepts it. And the more I keep near to Jesus, the more shall I grieve over the evil I have done and grow in humility before God.

For another reason, too, to keep near the cross, to be looking up in humble faith to the dying Redeemer, is the best position for me to occupy in recalling my sin.

For here I see the completeness, the all-sufficiency of the remedy. However great the evil I discover, help and salvation is close at hand. I can never despair whilst I gaze on Him who was wounded for my transgressions and who bore my sins in His own body on the tree. As I look up to Him I know that He can cover and He can conquer them; he can give pardon and power; for He, the Crucified One, is now the exalted One; and He can succour, and sanctify, and save evermore those who look to Him.

In what way shall I conduct this search? What guidance will be most profitable? By what standard shall I prove and try my ways?

The whole volume of God's Word, and every part of it may be used for this purpose. But I will name a few of those points more especially needful to be considered.

I may take from time to time each of the Ten Commandments with the light thrown upon them in the New Testament. Though the condemnation of the law is past to those in Christ, yet it is still to be to them a rule of life. And the various precepts given on Sinai, as in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere, may assist us in applying the great law of love to the details of the Christian life.

I must consider how far I am striving to honour God and to do His will in the different relationships of life.

In the world of commerce, in the house of business, in buying and selling, in payment of debts, in all my transactions with reference to money, in my dealing with the property of others, am I guided by the plain rules of truth and justice? Do I invariably speak the truth, and do to others as I would they should do to me?

In society, in intercourse with friends, in

seasons of recreation, when I mingle with those I know or with strangers, am I watchful that my influence should be for good? Do I try to turn the scale, where I can, in favour of kindness, a hopeful view of others, a higher tone of conversation? Do I strive to check anything that borders on evil? Does my presence in any way tend to keep down lightness, and frivolity, and evil speaking, and the like?

In the Church of God what am I doing? Am I an element of help and blessing in the Lord's House? Do I engage my heart to approach God? Do I worship Him in spirit and in truth? Do I receive the Word with meekness and readiness, searching the Scriptures for confirmation of that which I hear? Do I join heartily in the responses and in the songs of praise? Do I pray earnestly in behalf of my Pastor and of the congregation? Do I render all the assistance in my power, by gifts and personal labour, to advance the kingdom of Christ? Do I remember the solemn vows I have made at Confirmation, and am I endeavouring faithfully to keep them?

In my own home am I living out, day by day, the life of Christ? Am I bringing all the little details of common work to the test of Christ's holy example? Do I ask myself again and

again, "What would Jesus do if He were in my place?" Do I make a conscience of the smallest matters? Am I earnest and thorough in all the work I have to do? Am I doing my duty faithfully as a parent or a child—as a brother or a sister? If I have those younger than myself around me, am I careful that my daily life and conversation is such that they may safely copy? Am I guilty of the neglect or omission of any plain duty? Do I redeem the time from indolence and sloth and profitless reading, and am I striving to add to the happiness of each member of the family? Do I readily yield to others when it may do good? Do I sacrifice my own pleasure and comfort if by this means I may adorn the doctrine of Christ? Do I carry the sunshine of cheerfulness about with me? Do I watch against evil tempers, and sullenness, and repining, a clouded brow, and fretfulness, and fault-finding?

In my own heart has Christ possession of the throne? Is His Word and will supreme? Or is any idol set up there?—Ambition, love of praise, sight-seeing, craving after riches, the world's pleasure, display in dress,—is any one of these taking the rule?

What are my motives of action?—Do I strive

to put self down and do all things for the love of Christ and for the glory of God? Do I act from principle, or from the impulse of the moment? What is the bent of my thoughts when I am most free for quiet meditation?—Are they earthward or heavenward?

Is it my desire to keep in the lowest room? Whatever talents God may entrust to my care, do I realize that I am but a steward and must give account for them all? Do I go often to the Saviour's footstool, and learn to follow Him in meekness and lowliness of heart? Do I trample beneath my feet all pride and vain glory and self-sufficiency, and act and feel as a little child towards my Father in heaven?

Such self-examination may be very helpful to me. Let it only be genuine and sincere; let it be carried on as beneath the eye of my Father and in sight of a crucified Saviour; for then it will not lead me to despair, however sinful I be, but to more hearty and continual dependance on Christ. In spite of all failure and shortcoming and sin, if I humble myself and trust only in Christ, there can be no condemnation. I am accepted in the Beloved and justified from all things. The ample folds of the righteousness of my Surety covers every spot and stain. And

I know that Christ will perfect that which He has begun : He will not forsake the work of His own hands. His Spirit will rest upon me and cleanse me from evil and corruption. The old man in me shall be subdued more and more, and the new man—that which is born from above—shall grow day by day. Therefore will I watch and pray, and commit my soul to His faithful keeping.

Search, try, O God, my thoughts and heart,
 If mischief lurk in any part ;
 Correct me where I go astray,
 And guide me in Thy perfect way.

PRAYER.

ALmighty God, unto whom all hearts be opened, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, and make me to know the evil that dwelleth in me : make me to be an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile. Let my heart be sound in Thy statutes that I be not ashamed. O God, I beseech Thee, root out every covetous desire, and deliver me from pride and ambition, and the love of this present

world. Teach me to hate every false way, and make me to love Thy testimonies more than gold or precious stones. Save me from the crafts and assaults of the devil, and keep me ever in Thy fear. Guard and protect me in the hour of temptation, and make me more than conqueror through Christ. O merciful Father, forgive, I beseech Thee, whatsoever Thou hast seen in me contrary to Thy will. Pardon anything of guile and hypocrisy, through the Saviour's blood. Grant that henceforth my love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. May I approve the things that are excellent, and be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Fill me with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

O Lord, regard me with Thy favour, and fulfil these my humble petitions, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

XI.

Cross-Bearing.

THE true Communicant must needs be a cross bearer. The Master has plainly told us. The precept of cross-bearing is co-extensive with the promise of salvation: it carries with it the same breadth of expression. We have the "any man" of promise: "If *any man* thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." So too of precept: "If *any man* will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." (Luke ix. 23.) We have the "whosoever" in the glorious promise of salvation: "*Whosoever* believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." So too in plain word of duty: "*Whosoever* doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 27.)

When Peter would have Christ spare Himself and turn aside from the cross, the Lord rebuked

him, and told Him that he too must be prepared to suffer, and even to sacrifice life itself for His sake. Nor is it otherwise in the history of the early Church and in the apostolic Epistles. All through the Christian is seen to be a cross-bearer. The disciples rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. Paul, who bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus,—the evidence of the persecutions he had endured,—yet still desired “to know the fellowship of His sufferings” and to be “made conformable to His death.” Timothy is reminded that “if we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with Him ;” and the Colossian Church is told that the Apostle rejoiced in his sufferings, and was content to “fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church.”

This is God's plan for our sanctification. In the path of cross-bearing, the Spirit moulds the believer in the likeness of Christ. It is God's plan, moreover, to manifest to the world the reality of the Christian's faith : it is thus seen that he is of a different spirit to the world around ; and thus, too, others are brought nigh to Christ.

But what is to be your motive in taking up

your cross? It must not be a thought of winning life and glory: your sufferings can never be the purchase-price of the inheritance. It is the path to heaven: but not your right and title to it. The price has been paid once for all in the precious blood of Christ, and you can never add to it by anything of your own. Ah, let your motive ever be the sight of Christ's cross, and His free love in bearing it for Thee! He saith to thee, "My child, I bore my heavy cross for thy sake. For thee, I went to Gethsemane and Golgotha: for thee, I tasted the bitter cup of shame and death. It was to remove thy guilt and to give thee peace: it was to raise thee from the pit and to set thee on a glorious throne."

"All this I did for thee!
What doest thou for Me?"

Come, hearken to the voice of thy Redeemer! Take gladly and thankfully the pardon and the peace, the comfort and the hope that spring up beneath His cross. Trust fully in Him to grant thee a frank and complete and present forgiveness of sin, and failure, and backsliding, and shortcoming. Rest thy weary soul beneath the shadow of this Tree of Life, and doubt not that

He welcomes thee to share His everlasting love. Then, in His strength, and in His name, and in the joy of His salvation, go forth willingly to bear thy cross, remembering that He is ever with thee,—that He bears the heaviest end, and will support and uphold thee all thy journey through.

But what is this cross-bearing? What does it imply? In what way are you to act so as to fulfil the precept?

There can be no doubt as to the main purpose and intention of it: it does not mean simply that you are to endure a certain amount of self-denial. You are to take your cross, and *be willing, if God calls you, to die on it*: you are to be prepared, if need be, to yield up life itself. You may be so placed that it is your duty to lay down your life for the brethren, or for the truth of God. Therefore you must cherish a martyr spirit. You must rise above a common every-day Christianity, that would have the comforts of the Gospel but shrink from its high and lofty responsibilities; you must catch the Spirit of the Master; you must look for His mighty resurrection power, even the power of His Spirit, to rest upon you,—to make you glory in tribulation, and count it all gain to renounce

all things and count them but dung, that you may win Christ, and glorify His name either by life or by death.

It may be well to add a few hints as to the way in which you must exercise this spirit in daily life.

Remember you have to take the cross laid on you by the Master, but *not to make a cross for yourself*. There is a self-denial which the Word of God does not require. To put yourself needlessly to bodily pain, to endure self-imposed penalties and austerities, to shut yourself up within the four walls of a monastery, and forsake those whom you are bound to love and honour, to crush natural modesty by telling out every secret in the Confessional,—such self-denial as this God neither demands nor will bless. There is neither peace of mind nor spiritual profit in a course like this. Neither are you required to seek for trials or to pray for them: crosses enough there will be of God's appointing, without adding to them.

Go straight on in the plain path of duty; turn neither to the right hand nor to the left; endeavour to fulfil to the utmost every Christian duty; live for the good of others; shine as a light in a dark world; never be ashamed of the Captain

beneath whose banner you serve ; glorify God by your devotedness in maintaining His honour and spreading His kingdom, and you will be sure to find crosses enough to tax your patience and endurance to the very utmost. Again and again you will have to cross your own will and sacrifice your own inclinations. You will have to trample underfoot sloth, and love of ease, self-indulgence, self-pleasing, self-will ; *you will have to perform unpleasant duties* ; you will meet with opposition from the world, and disappointment in your fellow-Christians. To bear all this meekly for Christ's sake will require a life of continual self-denial.

To be a cross-bearer requires that you should be quite prepared to brave reproach and ridicule, and even hard treatment it may be, in confessing and following Christ. You must make up your mind to own Christ as your Lord and King, in all places and in all companies where you may be thrown. When the woman had touched Christ's garment and had gained an immediate and perfect cure, He would not let her go away unobserved. She could not be hid : she must come forth and confess what she had done, and what Christ had done for her. Even so must you act. Humbly, prayerfully, wisely, yet withal

boldly and fearlessly, stand forth as a witness for Christ's name ; and though it will often bring you discomfort or loss, yet it will deepen your piety and make your crown brighter by-and-by.

When Dilawur Khan—a very devoted native convert, in India—was sorely persecuted and ill-treated for Christ's sake, he would take it meekly and cheerfully, and even glory in it : "I never lost a little finger for Christ," he would say ; "but He gave His whole body for me." Even so let us never be ashamed of Christ, but ever glory in His grace and love.

You must not turn from the path of the cross when it comes to you through keeping God's commandments and following the dictates of your conscience. Do not turn from the hot, sultry mountain side, or the track to the summit, when the sharp briars and thorns or the rough stones wound or cut your feet. It is the way home : it is the way the Master went, and you must faithfully keep to it. For instance, it may be easier to let a man pass by whom you are bound to reprove, or to permit some wrong to be practised and say nothing about it. But would Christ have done it ? Does He not require it at your hand ? Then, too, you may find many a cross to take up in business matters. To be

true and honest, as before God, is not easy. An employer may expect you to hide the truth, or speak falsely; those about you may say that trade lies cannot be avoided; deceit may appear as it were the only policy you could follow, or you must lose a situation and perhaps experience great difficulties. What are you to do? If you are Christ's disciple, there is only one course to adopt. *Do what is right, and suffer for it.*

Act according to the plain precepts of the Word, and leave all consequences with God. Don't worship the golden image, though you may be cast in the furnace for refusing. Stand alone, if need be, and remember there is One who can deliver and save so that not a hair of your head shall perish. Or, if God should permit you to be tried for your faithfulness, refuse to sin, though you die for it. Nor shall it be loss. You shall receive a hundred-fold more in some shape, and hereafter the crown of everlasting life.

In the various providential sorrows and afflictions which may come to you, you must accept them as from the hand of God, and take Christ as your Pattern and Example in the endurance of them. It may be pain and bodily suffering; it may be gradual failure of health; it may be

straitness of means or actual want ; it may be the loss of a parent, or a husband, or a child. But whatever it be, do not murmur or repine. Trust all in God's hand, and yield to His wise disposings : let God's will be your pillow. Fret not, fear not, faint not ; forget not His loving-kindness in the past, nor His tender care for you in the present. Though He slay thee, yet put thy trust in Him.

Another point is important. Be willing to put your shoulder beneath the cross which others have to bear. Share the burdens of those who live with you. Let your heart go out in sympathy towards a sorrowing or suffering fellow-Christian. Stretch out your hand to lift the load from one sore oppressed with care and grief. Don't shrink from the trouble or expense which may thus come to you. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

For all this you have need of heavenly strength. But the strength is provided for you. Weak in yourself, you may yet be strong in the Lord. He will strengthen you with might by His Spirit ; He will nourish and sustain you by the manna of His Word ; He will uphold you, that your foot shall not slip.

Take up thy cross : let not its weight
Fill thy weak spirit with alarm.
His strength shall bear thy spirit up,
And brace thy heart and nerve thine arm.

Take up thy cross and follow Christ :
Nor think till death to lay it down ;
For only he who bears the cross
May hope to wear the glorious crown.

PRAYER.

O MERCIFUL God, my Father in Christ Jesus, I draw near to Thee in His name. Teach me to pray aright. Grant me Thy help and grace continually. Put forth in me Thy mighty power, and quicken me by Thy holy Spirit. Fill me with hearty thankfulness to Thee for Thy great salvation, and teach me to follow in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd.

O Gracious Saviour, I thank Thee that Thou didst bear for my sake the bitter cup of agony and shame. Make me willing to deny myself and take up my cross and follow Thee. Give me such love to Thee that I may desire in all things to be like Thee. Crucify in me all sin and self-pleasing. May I shrink from no cost,

or trial which Thou mayest appoint. Make me ready to sacrifice ease and comfort in doing Thy will, and to count all things but loss for the knowledge of Thyself.

Blessed Lord, give me true sympathy for the sorrows and sufferings of those around me. Show me how to bear the burdens of Thy people. Lead me in the path of self-denial, and may I never turn away my eyes from the miseries Thou wouldest have me relieve. Make me to weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice.

Endue me perfectly with Thine own mind and Spirit. Draw me, and I shall run after Thee. And when my work on earth is done, may I reign with Thee in glory. Hear me, O merciful Redeemer; and sanctify me wholly, both in body and soul, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

XII.

Till He Come

THE faithful Communicant must be a watcher looking out for the morning of Christ appearing. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. The power of darkness shall not triumph always. The King's chariot is on the way, and His presence will banish evil for ever, and shed eternal sunshine over His chosen ones. And one purpose of our Holy Communion seasons is to remind us of this. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this wine, ye do show the Lord's death **TILL HE COME.**" We look forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Our Communion is like a chain reaching from the last supper in the Upper room to the hour of Christ's second Advent. From the very beginning there has ever been found a little company of true disciples meeting to commemorate His dying love, and there will be to the end. And each genuine believer touches a link in that chain which is

ever growing longer behind and shorter before. Each successive Communion bears witness that more of the Church's waiting time is gone and less remains. We hearken to the Saviour's voice in ever clearer note proclaiming, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give to every man according to his works."

And when the chain is finished, when the last Communion has been held on earth, and the purpose of its institution accomplished, then from every nation, and from every branch of the visible Church, will be gathered to one everlasting Communion above, all those who have by faith been indeed partakers of Christ. So you must be waiting and watching. If you are Christ's, you have great expectations. Your kingdom is being prepared, and He will come to place on your head the crown of life. So let your thoughts be often turning to this blessed theme. Read over again and again the promises of His appearing, given in the Gospels, Epistles, and in the book of the Revelation. Study also for this purpose the book of Psalms, and the prophecy of Isaiah. They give a glorious view of the King coming in His Royal Majesty. Yea, and tarry patiently, and hopefully for the King, though as yet His chariot wheels seem to delay.

I remember thinking of this one evening during my travels in Sweden. I had spent the afternoon in a lovely spot. In one direction the eye caught sight of a gushing cataract pouring forth its mass of waters into the abyss below. In another, one could see the calm, flowing river and the five-arched bridge which spanned it. Then, all around, the hills and pleasant pasture fields added to the beauty of the scene. On the occasion I refer to the village was all astir. Crowds were seen wending their way to the river-side where arches of fir had been erected, and flags of every colour were waving in the breeze. Then came a season of long delay.

Some hundreds of men, women, and children were waiting all about, some standing on the bridge, some sitting on the hill-side, some gathered around the little village Inn, and many grew weary. The sun was sinking low in the West, clouds were arising that foretold storm and rain, and the chills of evening began to prevail. But hark! There is a murmuring of voices. And now a joyful cry: "The King is coming! The King is coming!" was the shout that in a moment awoke the enthusiastic cheers of the throng, and dispelled every thought of weariness or fatigue.

Good King Oscar and his Queen were paying a visit to the place, and as the homely cortége of the royal party passed along from spot to spot amidst the glad greetings of those simple country folk, I question if there was one but felt happy and proud to welcome their King. An hour soon passed by, the King drove away, the crowd dispersed, and the only Englishman present that day walked on toward his resting-place for the night, thinking of another King and another meeting.

Yes, the King is coming, even the King of all the earth, the king of Saints, the King of Angels, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; even He it is who is on the way. But what a contrast to the scene at Elf-Karlby which has just been described! On this occasion some half dozen carriages and a few attendants accompanied the royal party, and a few hundreds of their subjects were present to meet them. But by and by we look to see the air filled with the angelic hosts that will attend our King, and what countless myriads shall behold Him on that day! I often recall a crowd that assembled at the time of peace being made with Russia. There could not have been less than three to four hundred thousand within sight of the spot

where I stood. I remember well that sea of faces, and when the lurid light from some coloured rocket fell upon them I could not but think of that hour when a far vaster multitude will be assembled, and the awful light of the Great White Throne will make visible the presence of every single individual that has ever trodden our earth.

But the King Himself! Upon Him every eye is fixed. He was glorious in the days of His humiliation. What glory shone forth in Him when as the infant in Bethlehem, the angels sang His praise! What glory shone forth at the marriage feast, at the grave of Lazarus, at His cross, when love could endure such contradiction of sinners, and, though suffering, triumph in the salvation of His Church.

But in the eyes of His saints He shall be still more glorified at His appearing. Together with the revelation of His everlasting love shall He display the majesty of His power, and of His impartial justice, equity, and truth toward all mankind.

The King is coming, and we must be awake and ready to meet Him. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober; let us cast aside the sleep of indolence, the sleep of

false security, the sleep of ease and self indulgence. "Simon, sleepest thou?" the Saviour once said to Peter, and thus He speaks now to each slumbering soul. We see sometimes an advertisement on the walls: "Sleeping saloons from London to Bradford, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and the North." But no sleeping saloon will convey you from earth to heaven. You must be awake, and on the watch tower.

A little while, He'll come again.

Let us the precious hours redeem;
Our only grief to give Him pain;

Our joy to serve and follow Him.

Watching and ready may we be,
As those who long their Lord to see.

The King is coming, and we must be decided for Him. There must be no halting between Christ and the world; there must be no blowing hot to-day and cold to-morrow; there must be nothing of veering round from North to South, from East to West, to suit the company in which we are thrown. We must acknowledge the King, carry His standard, wear His uniform, boldly fight in His cause, and glory in His name. Shame on us for our timid, time-serving thoughts! If God be for us who can be against us? If the King is coming to reward His faithful ones, can

we be too bold, too courageous, too faithful in His service? He hath said it: "He that is not with Me is against Me."

The King is coming, and we must cast aside every sin and whatsoever will not endure the light of His presence. If you are a true Communicant you must not excuse yourself in the least evil. You must not palliate any inconsistency, but search it out and forsake it.

Never forget that the sins of the Lord's own people are far more hateful to Him than those of others. The more precious a jewel is the more you grieve over any flaw in it, or any accident that might befall it. So the Lord is most dishonoured in the evils that are found in those that He regards as His jewels. Or you might look at it in another light. A parent has a child dearer to him than all the world: but if that child be rebellious, or ungrateful, or unmindful of that father's wishes, will it not pain him more than the misconduct of all beside? Even so is it that God reckons His children very dear to Him, and therefore their sin and disobedience are doubly grievous in His sight. Oh, watch against everything in word, in spirit, in temper, in action, that will wound the Saviour's heart, or bring a shadow of dishonour upon His

name ! Think of His coming, and do nothing that will not stand approved in that day.

The King is coming, and we must not grow faint or weary by the way It may be somewhat with you, as at the village in Sweden. The sun of life or of prosperity may decline, darkness may begin to overspread your home, shadows may rest upon the Church of Christ, unbelief and error may hide the light, storms may lower and tempests of trouble may threaten,—but be patient and hopeful and wait for the King.

In one sense you know that even now you have Him always with you. He is near you in lovingkindness, in faithfulness, and in His readiness to comfort and help you. You have “the real presence” in a far higher way than if you could eat His body and drink His blood by any fancied transformation of the elements of bread and wine. “When I go to rest at night the Saviour is so near me that it seems as if He were walking on the stairs by my side,” said a widow, who had lately lost her husband.

Ah, this is indeed a reality which supports and consoles the sorrowing heart !

And then, when waiting time is over, the King shall come in His beauty and His bride shall share His glory.

“And if I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.”

Weep not. Jesus thinks of thee
When all beside forget,
And on thee so lovingly
His faithfulness hath set,
That though all
Ruined fall,
Everything on earth be shaken,
Thou shalt never be forsaken.

Weep not. Jesus comforts thee,
And He yet shall save ;
And every sorrow thou shalt see
Lie buried in thy grave.
Sin shall die,
Grief shall fly :
Thou hast wept thy latest tears
When the Lord of life appears.

The Communion Service.

¶ *Then shall the Priest return to the Lord's Table, and begin the Offertory, saying one or more of these Sentences following, as he thinketh most convenient in his discretion.*

LET your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. *St. Matt. v.*

Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon the earth ; where the rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal : but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ; where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. *St. Matt. vi.*

Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them ; for this is the Law and the Prophets. *St. Matt. vii.*

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. *St. Matt. vii.*

Zacchæus stood forth, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor ; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore four-fold. *St. Luke xix.*

Who goeth a warfare at any time of his own cost ? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof ? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock ? *1 Cor. ix.*

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your worldly things ? *1 Cor. ix.*

Do ye not know, that they who minister about holy things live of the sacrifice ; and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar ? Even so hath the Lord also ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. *1 Cor. ix.*

He that soweth little shall reap little ; and he that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously. Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity ; for God loveth a cheerful giver. *2 Cor. ix.*

Let him that is taught in the Word minister unto him that teacheth, in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap. *Gal. vi.*

While we have time, let us do good unto all men ; and specially unto them that are of the household of faith. *Gal. vi.*

Godliness is great riches, if a man be content with that he hath : for we brought nothing into the world, neither may we carry : ny thing out. *1 Tim. vi.*

Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life *1 Tim. vi.*

God is not unrighteous, that he will forget your works, and labour that proceedeth of love ; which love ye have showed for his Name's sake, who have ministered unto the saints, and yet do minister. *Heb. vi.*

To do good, and to distribute, forget not ; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. *Heb. xiii.*

Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ? *1 St. John iii.*

Give alms of thy goods, and never turn thy face from any poor man ; and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee *Tobit iv.*

Be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plenteously ; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little : for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity. *Tobit iv.*

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord : and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again. *Prov. xix.*

Blessed be the man that provideth for the sick and needy : the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble. *Psalms xli.*

¶ Whilst these Sentences are in reading, the Deacons, Churchwardens, or other fit person appointed for that purpose, shall receive the Alms for the Poor, and other devotions of the people, in a decent bason to be provided by the Parish for that purpose ; and reverently bring it to the Priest, who shall humbly present and place it upon the holy Table.

¶ And when there is a Communion, the Priest shall then place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine, as he shall think sufficient.

After which done, the Priest shall say,

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who by thy holy Apostle hast taught us to make prayers, and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men ; We humbly beseech thee most mercifully [* to

accept our alms and oblations, and to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty ; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord : And grant, that all they that do confess thy holy

** If there be no alms or oblations, then shall the words [of accepting our alms and oblations] be left out unsaid.*

Name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity, and godly love. We beseech thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors ; and specially thy Servant *VICTORIA* our Queen ; that under her we may be godly and quietly governed : And grant unto her whole Council, and to all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue. Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all Bishops and Curates, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments : And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace ; and especially to this congregation here present ; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear, and receive thy holy Word ; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord to comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear ; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom : Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

¶ *At the time of the celebration of the Communion, the Communicants being conveniently placed for the receiving of the holy Sacrament, the Priest shall say this Exhortation.*

DEARLY beloved in the Lord, ye that mind to come to the holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, must consider how Saint Paul exhorteth all persons diligently to try and examine themselves, before they presume to eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup. For as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood ; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us) ; so is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily. For then we are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour ; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body ; we kindle God's wrath against us ; we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death. Judge therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord ; repent you truly for your sins past ; have a lively and stead-

fast faith in Christ our Saviour ; amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men ; so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries. And above all things ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour, Christ, both God and man ; who did humble himself, even to the death upon the Cross, for us, miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death ; that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life. And to the end that we should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained to us ; he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort. To him therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, let us give (as we are most bounden) continual thanks ; submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. *Amen.*

¶ Then shall the Priest say to them that come to receive the holy Communion,

YE that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways ; Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort ; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

¶ Then shall this general Confession be made, in the name of all those that are minded to receive the holy Communion, by one of the Ministers ; both he and all the people kneeling humbly upon their knees, and saying,

ALMIGHTY God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men ; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, Against thy Divine Majesty, Provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings ; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us ; The burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father ; For thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, Forgive us all that is past ; And grant that we may ever hereafter Serve and please thee In newness of life, To the honour and glory of thy Name ; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Priest (or the Bishop, being present) stand up, and turning himself to the people, pronounce this absolution.*

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; Have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Priest say,*

Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him.

COME unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. *St. Matt. xi. 28.*

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *St. John iii. 16.*

Hear also what Saint Paul saith.

This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. *1 Tim. i. 15.*

Hear also what Saint John saith.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. *1 St. John ii. 1.*

¶ *After which the Priest shall proceed, saying,*

Lift up your hearts.

Answer. We lift them up unto the Lord.

Priest. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

Answer. It is meet and right so to do.

¶ *Then shall the Priest turn to the Lord's Table, and say,*

IT is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, * Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.

* *These words [Holy Father] must be omitted on Trinity Sunday.*

¶ *Here shall follow the Proper Preface, according to the time, if there be any specially appointed: or else immediately shall follow,*

THEREFORE with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. *Amen.*

PROPER PREFACES.

Upon Christmas Day, and seven days after

BECAUSE thou didst give Jesus Christ thine only Son to be born as at this time for us ; who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his mother ; and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin. Therefore with angels, etc.

Upon Easter Day, and seven days after.

BUT chiefly are we bound to praise thee for the glorious Resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord : for he is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world ; who by his death hath destroyed death, and by his rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with Angels, etc

Upon Ascension Day, and seven days after.

THROUGH thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who after his most glorious Resurrection manifestly appeared to all his Apostles, and in their sight ascended up into heaven to prepare a place for us ; that where he is, thither we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory. Therefore with Angels, etc.

Upon Whit Sunday, and six days after.

THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord ; according to whose most true promise, the Holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the Apostles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth ; giving them both the gift of divers languages, and also boldness with fervent zeal constantly to preach the Gospel unto all nations ; whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of thee, and of thy Son Jesus Christ. Therefore with Angels, etc.

Upon the Feast of Trinity only.

WHO art one God, one Lord ; not one only Person, but three Persons in one Substance. For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality. Therefore with Angels, etc.

¶ After each of which Prefaces shall immediately be sung or said,

THEREFORE with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name : evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory : Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. *Amen*

¶ *Then shall the Priest, kneeling down at the Lord's Table, say, in the name of all them that shall receive the Communion, this Prayer following.*

WE do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. *Amen.*

¶ *When the Priest, standing before the Table, hath so ordered the Bread and Wine, that he may with the more readiness and decency break the Bread before the people, and take the Cup into his hands, he shall say the Prayer of Consecration, as followeth.*

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again; Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee; and grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body

** Here the Priest is to take the Paten into his hands:*

† And here to break the Bread:

‡ And here to lay his hand upon all the Bread.

§ Here he is to take the Cup into his hand:

|| And here to lay his hand upon every vessel (be it Chalice or Flagon) in which there is any Wine to be consecrated.

and Blood: who, in the same night that he was betrayed, *took Bread; and, when he had given thanks, †he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, ‡this is my Body which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of me. Likewise after supper he §took the Cup; and, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this || is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Minister first receive the Communion in both kinds himself, and then proceed to deliver the same to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in like manner (if any be present), and after that to the people also in order, into their hands, all*

meekly kneeling. And, when he delivereth the Bread to any one, he shall say,

THE Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

¶ And the Minister that delivereth the Cup to any one shall say,

THE Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

¶ If the consecrated Bread or Wine be all spent before all have communicated, the Priest is to consecrate more according to the Form before prescribed; beginning at Our Saviour Christ in the same night, etc., for the blessing of the Bread; and at Likewise after Supper, etc., for the blessing of the Cup.

¶ When all have communicated, the Minister shall return to the Lord's Table, and reverently place upon it what remaineth of the consecrated Elements, covering the same with a fair linen cloth.

¶ Then shall the Priest say the Lord's Prayer, the people repeating after him every Petition.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. *Amen.*

¶ After shall be said as followeth.

O LORD and heavenly Father, we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant, that by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee, that all we, who are partakers of this holy Communion, may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom,

in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. *Amen.*

Or this.

ALmighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee, for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son. And we most humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

¶ Then shall be said or sung,

GLORY be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesu Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord: thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*

¶ Then the Priest (or Bishop if he be present) shall let them depart with this Blessing.

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. *Amen.*

Texts for Meditation

DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER,
AND AT OTHER TIMES.

I. SELF-ABASEMENT.

BEHOLD, I am vile ; what shall I answer Thee ? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. (Job xl. 4.)

I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job xlii. 5, 6.)

O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God : for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. (Ezra ix. 6.)

We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags ; and we all do fade as a leaf. (Isaiah lxiv. 6.)

The crown is fallen from our head : woe unto us, that we have sinned ! (Lam. v. 16)

When men are cast down, then Thou shalt say, There is lifting up ; and He shall save the humble person. (Job xxii. 29.)

He giveth grace to the humble. (1 Peter v. 5.)

II. FULL SALVATION.

Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. (Isaiah l. 18.)

Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. (Hebrews viii. 12.)

The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah liii. 6.)

He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him. (Hebrews vii. 25.)

By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God. (Eph. ii. 8.)

Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (Rom. vi. 14.)

III. EARNEST LONGINGS.

Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and

enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! (1 Chron. iv. 10.)

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. (Psalm xlii. 1, 2.)

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. (Psalm lxxiii. 25.)

I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for Thy commandments. (Psalm cxix. 131.)

I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory. (Ex. xxxiii. 18.)

Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Rev. xxii. 20.)

He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. (Ps. cvii. 9.)

IV. ONE THING.

One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. (Luke x. 42.)

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house

of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. (Psalm xxvii. 4.)

This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, . . . I press toward the mark. (Phil. iii. 13.)

If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. . . No man can serve two masters. (Matt. vi. 22—24.)

In singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. (Eph. vi. 5, 6.)

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. (James i. 8.)

V. HELP BY THE WAY.

He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. (Isaiah xl. 29.)

I have laid help upon One that is mighty. (Psalm lxxxix. 19.)

I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. (Isaiah xli. 13.)

My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. (2 Cor. xii. 9.)

Lord, help me ! (Matt. xv. 25.)

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. (Psalm cxxi. 1.)

VI. PEACE IN CHRIST.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John xiv. 27.)

These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world. (John xvi. 33.)

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace. (Eph. ii. 13, 14.)

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee : because he trusteth in Thee. (Isaiah xxvi. 3.)

Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means. (2 Thess. iii. 16.)

VII. TRUE WORSHIP.

John iv. 23, 24 ; Eph. ii. 18 ; Mark xv. 38 ;
Heb. x. 19—22, iv. 14—16, xi. 4 ; Mark xi. 24 ;
Rev. v. 13.

VIII. THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

Eph. v. 26—28 ; John xv. 9—13, xiv. 21—
23 ; Isaiah lxiii. 9 ; Jer. xxxi. 3 ; John xxi. 15
—17 ; 2 Cor. 5, 14, 15.

IX. HOLY WALKING.

Gen. v. 22—24, xvii. 1 ; Psalm ci. 2, cxix. 1 ;
Micah iv. 5, vi. 8 ; 1 John ii. 6 ; Eph. v. 2, 18 ;
Gal. v. 16 ; Rev. iii. 4.

X. PROGRESS IN HOLINESS.

Rom. xv. 13 ; Eph. i. 15—19, iii. 14—21 ;
Phil. i. 9—11 ; Col. i. 9—12 ; 2 Thess. ii. 16—
17 ; Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

XI. VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION.

1 Cor. x. 13 ; Heb. ii. 17, 18 ; Rom. viii. 37 ;
James i. 12 ; Psalm xvii. 4—9 ; Rev. ii. 10,
iii. 10—12.

XII. BEYOND THE RIVER.

Isa. xliii. 2 ; Rev. xxi. 3, 4, xxii. 3—5 ; John : xvii. 24 ; Rev. vii. 9—14.

How bright these glorious spirits shine !
Whence all their bright array ?
How came they to the blissful seats
Of everlasting day ?

Lo, these are they from sufferings great
Who came to realms of light,
And in the blood of Christ have washed
Those robes which shine so bright.

Now with triumphal palms they stand
Before the throne on high,
And serve the God they love, amidst
The glories of the sky.

Hunger and thirst they feel no more,
Nor sun with scorching ray :
God is their Sun, whose cheering beams
Diffuse eternal day.

The Lamb who dwells amidst the throne
Shall o'er them still preside,—
Feed them with nourishment divine,
And all their footsteps guide.

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